Commentary on Revelation by Oecumenius

with eighty-four excerpt cross-references to his other Bible commentaries

TRANSLATED BY JOHN LITTERAL

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INTRODUCTION

The commentary that was written by Oecumenius in the sixth century has been considered by many scholars to be the first full Greek Bible commentary written on the book of Revelation. The first complete commentary to have been written on the book of Revelation was in Latin by Victorinus of Pettau in the late third century. The Latin Church universally accepted the book of Revelation as canonical earlier than the Greek Church, therefore, commentaries on the book of Revelation in the Greek Church came at a later time than it did in the Latin Church, which is why it took nearly three centuries later for a Greek commentary to be produced than for a Latin commentary.

The identity of Oecumenius has been debated for some time due to the lack of written documentation about him. Many modern scholars have rejected the idea that the Oecumenius who wrote this commentary on Revelation to be the same commentator of other New Testament commentaries (Acts-Jude). They refer to the authorship of those other commentaries to be "pseudo-Oecumenian." I take the position that it is the same Oecumenius who wrote the commentary on Revelation and Acts-Jude. So far, I have translated his commentaries on 1 Timothy-Jude, and now the commentary on Revelation. My main motivation for translating this commentary on Revelation at this point in time is to compare the commentary on Revelation with the other commentaries attributed to Oecumenius. I figured that this would allow me to compare the styles and similarities as well as the differences. Before I translated the commentary on Revelation, I had already felt that the styles were similar and probably from the same author, and now, after translating the Revelation commentary, I am even more convinced that it is the same author for all of the commentaries. I am in good company when it comes

to the Oecumenian authorship of all the Bible commentaries. H.C. Hoskier[1], who produced the first critical Greek text of the commentary on Revelation by Oecumenius also held that it was the same Oecumenius. For a complete argument made concerning the Oecumenian authorship, I have written thoroughly about it in the introductions to my other translations of the commentaries by Oecumenius. Now, I want to demonstrate some of the similarities and differences between the commentaries of the other New Testament books by Oecumenius verses this commentary on Revelation.

Similarities

In this translation of the commentary on Revelation by Oecumenius, I have provided eighty-four excerpts from all of his other commentaries on the New Testament. These excerpts have been chosen because they match particular citations of Scripture that Oecumenius made while commentating on the book of Revelation. The goal in mind is to compare how Oecumenius interpreted those particular passages of Scripture in his other commentaries as related to the context that he was using them for in his interpretations on the text of Revelation. For example, while Oecumenius was interpreting Revelation 15:1-4, he quoted 1 Corinthians 3:12-13 in his interpretation. Not only do the explanations share similarities in both commentaries, Oecumenius also quotes exactly the same other two Scripture passages in both places, that being James 3:2 and Job 14:4-5. Another example is when Oecumenius explains the meaning of Rev. 19:10. He quotes Hebrews 1:14 while interpreting Rev. 19:10. Not only does he make the connection between the two passages, but in both places he quotes Gregory of Nazianzen's Orations as an example. But the most striking of all examples is when Oecumenius is explaining the meaning of Revelation 8:1-2, he quotes 1 Thessalonians 4:16

and 1 Corinthians 15:52. In his commentary on 1 Cor. 15:52, Oecumenius explains the meaning of that Revelation passage concerning the seventh seal, and he gives the same analogy about "a king" that he gave in the comments on Revelation, and he also uses "a king" analogy in his commentary on 1 Thessalonians 4:16, therefore showing direct continuity between all three commentaries. The interpretations of that passage in Revelation that he wrote in this commentary on 1 Corinthians 15 share the same unique interpretation in his comments on Revelation that Oecumenius is known for!

The Excerpts

There are eighty-four excerpts throughout this commentary that I provided. In many places where Oecumenius quotes Scripture when providing an explanation to the meaning of Revelation, he quoted the Old and New Testaments many times. In those places where he quoted from the books that he wrote commentaries on, such as Acts-Jude, I translated those excerpts from his commentaries, and I placed those excerpts right below the place where he quoted those Scripture passages in his Revelation commentary. This not only allows the reader to compare his interpretations against one another, but it also adds value to the commentary on Revelation because there are places where the excerpts provide additional insight.

As mentioned above, there is noteworthy harmony between his commentary on Revelation and his other Bible commentaries. That is not to say that each and every place in the Revelation commentary that Oecumenius quotes Scripture that the excerpts from his other commentaries are in direct relation, because that is not the claim I am making. There are places where the relation between the comments are neutral. But that is to be expected because when a commentator quotes Scripture, it is not always

necessary that the Scripture being quoted is bound to that one particular context that it is being used for. For example, when Oecumenius quotes a passage of Scripture from another book of the Bible while expounding on the book of Revelation, that quote of another book of the Bible is meant to assist in interpreting the passage in the book of Revelation, not to provide a full interpretation on that passage he is quoting from. In other words, you may find some helpful nuggets of insight on that one passage being quoted from, but in most cases that passage being quoted is not being dealt with directly and understood in the fullest possible context as it would be handled if it was being dealt with directly as if he would in his commentary on that particular book of the Bible. When Oecumenius quotes a passage like Ephesians 4:5 in his Revelation commentary, he is more than likely not going to give that passage nearly as much attention as he would if in his commentary on Ephesians because the main purpose is interpreting the passages on Revelation. Now sometimes you can find places where Oecumenius will quote a passage from another book of the Bible and he may expound on it more than usual, but that is not common because quoting other passages is meant to assist in bringing a fuller understanding to the context of the passage that he is writing the commentary on.

Differences?

One thing that I have noticed when translating the other Bible commentaries by Oecumenius was that he rarely ever quoted the book of Revelation. One might assume that he would have alluded to or quoted the book of Revelation more often than he did considering that he did write commentaries on Acts-Jude. The only place in his other commentaries that he did deal directly with the book of Revelation was in his commentary on 1 Corinthians, as I mentioned above[2]. I did find a couple of places where it

appears that Oecumenius alluded to the book of Revelation in his commentary on 1 John (comments on 1 Jn. 1:7; 2:13), but those are some vague examples. But it is not too surprising that one cannot find a lot of examples where he quotes the book of Revelation. One reason why Oecumenius did not quote from the book of Revelation more often is because he was from the Greek speaking church, and Oecumenius was at the (slow moving) cusp of a wider acceptance by the Eastern Church of the book of Revelation and its canonicity. Oecumenius may have shied away from quoting the book of Revelation more often in his other commentaries because he knew that a lot of other Eastern Christians who would read his commentaries would not have approved of the canonicity of Revelation and would reject his commentaries had he quoted Revelation throughout. Another reason that he may have not quoted the book of Revelation more often is because Oecumenius wrote many of his commentaries, not as an original commentator, but as a compiler of quotes. Oecumenius relied heavily upon earlier Church Fathers like John Chysostom, Theodoret of Cyrus, etc., who rejected the canonicity of the book of Revelation. It is likely that Oecumenius wrote his commentary on Revelation after he wrote all of his other commentaries due to the complexity of the book as compared to the other books of the Bible, and due to the lack of a demand for a commentary on the book of Revelation in the East. Oecumenius did not have the luxury of being able use another commentary on the book of Revelation like he did for all the other commentaries that he wrote. He only had a very limited amount of resources to use that ever dealt with the book of Revelation, such as some of the comments made by earlier Church Fathers like Gregory of Nazianzen, Basil, Cyril of Alexandria, etc., who all wrote very little concerning the book of Revelation. Oecumenius had to take the role as an original exegete while writing on Revelation, something that he never had to do prior. Even his contemporary Andrew of Caesarea, who wrote a popular commentary on

Revelation not long after Oecumenius did, who was critical of the commentary by Oecumenius on Revelation, still had an advantage because he was able to at least build upon and/or write in opposition to Oecumenius based upon what Oecumenius had already taken a shot at and had already contemplated on and articulated.

The Uniqueness of Oecumenius on Revelation

Since Oecumenius was the first among the Eastern Church to write a commentary on the book of Revelation, and he had no other commentary to rely upon to use as a reference point, he had to take the knowledge of Scripture that he had, which was very impressive, and go from there. Unfortunately, this commentary by Oecumenius did not circulate and gain much popularity, and it became lost for many centuries until it was rediscovered in the early 1900's. One will find very unique interpretations on the book of Revelation in this commentary. It is up to you the reader to decide what exegetical value that you want to place on this commentary. I myself, have grown very fond of this commentary for the past two decades, and it has helped to shape my own perspective and understanding on Biblical eschatology and the meaning behind the book of Revelation.

A unique characteristic of this commentary is the Marian interpretation of chapter 12 of Revelation. Oecumenius understood "the woman clothed with the sun" to be the Virgin Mary. Oecumenius displayed a typical deep devotion to Mary from an Eastern Orthodox perspective, calling her the Mother of God. He even upholds the early doctrine laid out by Gregory of Nyssa that Mary did not suffer birth pains, but he understood that the "birth pains" were symbolic of Mary's anxiety concerning what Joseph might have thought about her pregnancy until the angel informed him that she conceived through the Holy Spirit.

Oecumenius did an excellent job relating the passage in Revelation 12 about the woman and the Dragon to the accounts in the Gospels and the struggles that the Holy Family encountered with Herod trying to kill the infant Jesus.

Another unique characteristic in this commentary is how Oecumenius interpreted the two beasts in the following chapter, Revelation 13. There is the beast coming out of the sea, and the beast coming out of the earth. This leads to three characters, the Dragon, the beast coming out of the sea, and the beast coming out of the earth. Many interpret the Dragon as Satan, the beast coming out of the sea to be the Antichrist, and the beast coming out of the earth as the False Prophet. Most understand the False Prophet to be someone who helps the Antichrist persecute the church in the End Times. But Oecumenius understands the False Prophet to be the Antichrist. Oecumenius understands the beast coming out of the sea to be another fallen angel, an entity equal or nearly equal to the angelic status of Satan. Sometimes Oecumenius refers to this being as the Devil, another devil like Satan, who is also called the Devil. And since this fallen angel is in relation to the Mark of the Beast, therefore Oecumenius does not relate the Mark coming from the Antichrist, but is in direct relation to this fallen angel. Oecumenius gives some possible calculations for the name of the beast. One in particular is the Greek name "Lampetis." I find this very interesting because Lampetis literally means "shining one." Oecumenius doesn't make the connection in his commentary to the Hebrew word for the "serpent" found in Genesis called "nahash," but that word also means "shining one." Oecumenius understood that there was an angelic fall from heaven that was the result of a rebellion by Satan and some other angels, with this beast coming out of the sea being a high ranking fallen angel, who comes out of the sea of Tartarus, which is a prison mentioned in 2 Peter and Jude where the rebellious fallen angels are held as punishment for their rebellion.

Another unique interpretation by Oecumenius is Revelation chapter 20 concerning the thousand-year reign of Christ. This passage has led to various interpretations. Some called Chiliasm (or premillennialism), who believe that the thousand years is a literal 1000 years concerning a future earthly kingdom where Christ will reign with the resurrected saints while Satan is bound. There are others who take a symbolic view called Amillennialism, where they teach that the 1000 years is not a literal one-thousand years but symbolic for a very long time, which they call the "church age," which they believe that spans from the day of Pentecost until the second coming of Christ at the end of the world, while Satan is bound, meaning hindered from using his entire power until the end, when he will be given a short time with full power to persecute the church. But Oecumenius had a different interpretation from both Chiliasm and Amillennialism. Oecumenius understood the thousand years to be symbolic for the period of the earthly life of Jesus, from the time of His conception to the death on the cross. Oecumenius understood the binding of the Devil was done to prevent Satan and the other fallen angels and demons from being able to derail the Lord's mission of the Incarnation and His ministry on earth leading up to the Crucifixion. And after Satan and the demons lost due to the work on the Cross, Satan was released and able to then go back and try to deceive the nations once again. But as Oecumenius points out, Satan's attack against Christians, though does great damage, but it also leads Christians to sainthood because Satan challenges Christians, "For Satan is in a manner a trainer of men, providing an occasion of crowns to those who struggle." (see comments on Rev. 20:4-8)

The Translation

The main source that I consulted for the translation of this commentary is based upon two critical Greek texts, the version by H.C. Hoskier called The complete commentary of Oecumenius on the Apocalypse, and the newer version called *Oecumeni commentarius in apocalypsin* by M. De Groote[3]. What makes this translation different from the other existing English translations is that I did not follow the critical text right down to the letter, but I adopted variant manuscript readings in places where I discerned were correct, versus the "oldest" manuscript readings that had scribal errors. The critical texts strictly followed the readings from the oldest manuscripts, but there were many places, especially the Scripture text of Revelation, that the oldest manuscripts erred, while the later manuscripts like manuscripts 203 and 240 had the correct readings. The scribal errors used in the critical text at times were so obvious and blatant that I am perplexed by the choice of using the erred readings from the oldest manuscripts for the critical text simply because it came from the oldest manuscripts. There were many occasions where the critical text would use the scribal errors in the Scripture text of Oecumenius but below in the comments by Oecumenius it had the correct readings, demonstrating that the editors chose the errors over the correct readings for no other reason than following the oldest reading. This level of strictness to textual critical rules were beyond what my conscience would allow, so I discerned the best that could to provide the correct readings.

Introduction footnotes

1. The complete commentary of Oecumenius on the Apocalypse : now printed for the first time from manuscripts at Messina, Rome, Salonika, and Athos, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, Hoskier, H. C. (Herman Charles), 1864-1938, editor. Page 4

2. It is possible that Oecumenius quoted or alluded to the book of Revelation in his commentaries on Acts-2 Thessalonians because I have not fully translated those commentaries yet. I may find more examples later when I get to those translation projects.

3. Oecumeni commentarius in apocalypsin by M. De Groote, Publisher : Peeters, Publication date: January 1, 1998, ISBN-10 : 9042902361

Commentary on Revelation

By Oecumenius

English Translation

PREFACE

[First Discourse]

"All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching" (2 Tim. 3:16), as some sacred oracle once said.

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON 2 TIMOTHY 3:16
All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable. Having spoken many ways of comfort, Paul now speaks of the greatest, that which comes from the reading of the Scriptures. For he is about to say something sad, namely about his own death. But if Timothy must read, how much more must we? ***for teaching.*** Since good things teach both lessons and actions.

Indeed, all who have proclaimed to us the saving word, whether prophets, apostles, and evangelists alike, were inspired by the Spirit. The divine John, holier than all heralds and more spiritual than every spirit, having leaned upon the chest of the Lord (Jn. 13:25) and having drawn a more abundant grace of the Spirit through the kisses, was thus called the son of thunder (Mark 3:17). For he impressed upon the world beneath the heavens with his divine teachings. But indeed, his present treatise, concerning mysteries that are sparse [ἰσχνῶν] and obscure, justly holds the most secret and profound character, as one might well consider. For it is not only about present matters that we discuss, but also about things past and future. For this is characteristic of perfect prophecy to encompass the three distinct times; for even those from outside of Christianity bring in the seers [μάντεις] among them who know both the present and the future, and before the present[1], in the foresight of those among us, who, I believe, have become prophets. For those who consult oracles among them never possessed the knowledge of all things, since even the demons [δαίμονες] operating within them did not compel the one attempting to interpret spiritual matters to be spiritual and wise concerning divine things, as the divine apostle teaches that "spiritual matters must be judged by spiritual things." (1 Cor. 2:13) But I have been so far removed from the operation of the Spirit, as much as from divine and highest wisdom; therefore, I have undertaken this endeavor more boldly than cautiously.

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON 1 CORINTHIANS 2:13
"Not in humanly taught wisdom." Therefore, Paul says we are wiser than those wise among men, insofar as some have Plato and Pythagoras as teachers, while we have the Holy Spirit. ***"But in teachings of the Holy Spirit."*** Therefore, there is nowhere need of human wisdom. For all things are spiritual. ***"spiritual matters must be judged by spiritual things."*** He says this when, he asserts, a spiritual question arises, we bring comparisons and solutions from spiritual examples; for instance: if Christ rose on the third day, I derive the proofs and testimony from Jonah (Jonah 1:7; Matt. 12:39-40, Luke 11:29-32); if a virgin bore the Lord, the solution comes from the barren

Anne and Elizabeth. *[Anne: Traditionally recognized as the barren mother of the Virgin Mary.]*

"For wisdom does not enter a corrupt soul, nor does it dwell in a body burdened by grievous sins," (Wis. 1:4) as seems true concerning Solomon.

Therefore, I chose to undertake a certain exercise, examining my own unthoughtful self within it. It is not unknown, as some have attempted to say regarding the present writing, that it is both spurious and inconsistent with the other works of John. But I bear witness to the genuine and divine nature of these soul-beneficial words, which are worthy of the author, and have been accepted and confirmed by reputable Fathers: Athanasius the Great in his exposition of the canonical books of both the Old and New Testaments[2]; Basil the Divine in his brief treatise On the Son[3]; Gregory the Theologian in his treatise On the Coming of the Bishops[4]; Methodius the Most Wise in his discourse On the Resurrection[5]; Cyril the Great, both by deed and word, in the sixth book of his Treatise On the Spirit and Truth; and in addition, Hippolytus the Divine in his Interpretation of Daniel.[8]

But for brevity's sake we shall mention no more. Such precise and numerous Fathers would not have considered this valid at all had anything in it been illegitimate and rejected. Nor indeed would such a view have been held by so great and such distinguished men unless they had known by every means and in every respect that it was complete in itself. For if it were not so, it certainly would not be what Solomon says in Ecclesiastes: "A threefold cord is not quickly broken." (Eccles. 4:12) Moreover, the sixfold cord is all the stronger (it will not break).[9]

What then does the sacred teaching of Christ reveal to us through the Revelation, and speak of His divine love? For it is necessary

to write down the divine words from now on, having called upon His intercessions for help.

Translator's notes for preface.

1. Homer (700B.C.), Iliad 1.70; cf. Hesiod, Theogony 38. This exact phrasing is used in the Homeric Iliad to describe the seer Calchas. In Book 1 of the Iliad, when the Achaeans are suffering from a plague, Achilles suggests consulting a seer. The narrator introduces Calchas with the following description: "Among them arose Calchas son of Thestor, by far the best of bird-diviners, who knew the things that were, and that were to be, and that had been before" (often rendered as "who knew the present, the future, and the past"

2. Athanasius of Alexandria (373A.D.), Ep. 39.

3. Basil of Caesarea (died 379A.D.), Against Eunomius 2.14.

4. Gregory of Nazianzus (died 390A.D.), Orationes 42.1.

5. Methodius of Olympus (died 311A.D.), On the Resurrection 2.28.5.

6. Cyril of Alexandria (died 444A.D.), On Worship and Reverence in Spirit and Truth 6.

7. Hippolytus of Rome (died 236A.D.), Commentary on Daniel 3.9.10.

8. The Patrologia Graeca reads. That this treatise is also an initiation into the contemplation (ἀνακλίσεως) of the divine wisdom from above, beloved and inspired by God, and undoubtedly beneficial, has been firmly established; however, not by those illegitimate ones who, being composed by some erroneous spirit, have falsely claimed it, nor even by a genuine son worthy of thunder, if one is to believe Athanasius the Great in his Exposition of the Canons of the Old and New Testaments, who approves this work as genuine, as well as Basil the Divine in his brief discourse concerning the Son, and to Gregory the Divine, in his homiletic discourse; and to Methodius the most wise Bishop of Patara, in his treatise on the resurrection; and to Cyril the Great, in his labors concerning worship and veneration in the Spirit; in addition to Hippolytus, the youthful presiding officer of Rome, in his interpretation of the prophecy concerning Daniel; and to many others, so as not to be longwinded — whose works were not deemed spurious or rejected unless found

genuine. Such precise and numerous authorities would not have considered this valid unless they recognized the moderation and earnestness with which it was pursued.

9. I chose to use the reading from the Patrologia Graeca in this paragraph because it reads clearer.

CHAPTER 1

Revelation 1:1-2 ***The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place; he made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who testifies to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.***

In the opening words, it is fitting to point out that in all his writings, the divine John, having dwelt upon the God-inspired words [θεοπρεπέσι] of our Savior Jesus Christ, in the present work dwells rather on his human aspects, so that he might not only be recognized from the more divine qualities, but also from the human ones.

For it is a sample [δεῖγμα] of pure theology, just as to believe that the divine Word is from God and the Father, begotten before all ages and times, uncreated and consubstantial with the Father and the Spirit, and coexistent with the ages, and of all creation both spiritual and perceptible, according to what is said by the wisest Paul in the Epistle to the Colossians, that "in Him all things in heaven and on earth were created, the invisible and the visible, whether thrones, dominions, principalities, or authorities; all things were created through Him and for Him, and He is the head of the body and the church." (Co. 1:18) "Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He might be first in all things," (Co. 1:16,18) therefore we must believe in Him for the last things [ἐσχάτων] and for our salvation.

And having become man, not by a change of divinity, but by the assumption of human flesh, endowed with a rational soul, so that Emmanuel is understood as united from two natures, both divinity and humanity, each fully possessing according to its own nature and proper quality and distinction, neither confused in the union into one, nor divided after the indescribable and invisible union. For both Nestorius and Eutyches are equally detestable; their positions are opposed and totally evil.

Therefore, in order that the teaching of our Savior might be precise and true to Him, having engaged in the other divine matters, as the Lord has said, here John employed words and thoughts suited to human beings; yet neither in those divine matters did he separate the divine from the human, nor here did he separate the human from the divine. Moreover, he used the writings to a greater or lesser extent.

From this point on, *the revelation* is given to him to speak; it is given from the Father to the Son, and it is given from the Son to us, *his servants*. Calling the saints the *servants* of Christ, He preserved for Him what is fitting for God. For whose servants would humans be, except for the Maker and Creator of humans? And who is the Creator of humans and all creation? No one except the only-begotten Word and Son of God. For he who is present as the author says in the Gospels, "all things were made through him." (Jn. 1:3)

What, then, does John wish to add *what must soon take place*? And yet, of the things that are to come, not yet accomplished, already a considerable amount of time has already passed since these things were spoken, more than five hundred years[1]. That all ages are regarded as nothing in the eyes of the eternal and everlasting God; "for a thousand years," the prophet says, "are in Your sight, O Lord, as the day that has just passed, or as a watch in the night." (Ps. 89:4) Therefore, the swift passage of time is not

measured by the completion of the years that have come to be, but rather by the power and eternity of God. For in truth, every extension of time, even if it is the greatest and longest, is considered small compared to the infinite.

Jesus Christ therefore *made it known* to me *what must take place*. Jesus did not appear Himself and speak, but *through His angel* He initiated me into the mysteries. You see the reverent love of this divine one, who confessed that it was revealed to him through an angel and that he did not hear it from the Lord's own mouth.

John says that he *testifies to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw*. In this form, he also used it in the Gospels, preserving for himself the credibility of his teaching. He said, "This is the one who testifies about these things," (Jn. 21:24) and having written these things; and we know that his testimony is true. And now he says he is a witness of the divine Word that was revealed to him. John speaks of the present Revelation and the testimony given by Christ; that is, through testimony, I am both a witness and an author.

> **<u>Revelation 1:3</u>** ***Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear them and keep what is written in it; for the time is near.***

He did not say only those who read are blessed, for many would be so blessed, since most read, but also those who hear and become obedient to the exhortations contained in it, and those who preserve and guard what is spoken as divine laws.

for the time is near. For to everyone who keeps the commandments of God, the time of blessedness is near. It either means that, or "near," he says, is the period of the time of departure. The term "near" has been interpreted in previous contexts.

<u>Revelation 1:4a</u> ***John to the seven churches in Asia: Grace to you and peace from God, who is, and who was, and who is to come*****,** he says.

This is equivalent to saying, "Grace to you from God, the Father of all of you." For the Father names Himself, revealing Himself to the wisest Moses at the burning bush, saying, "I AM THE ONE WHO IS [ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὤν]." (Ex. 3:14) And indeed, concerning the Son, the divine evangelist present says, "In the beginning was the Word; and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (Jn. 1:1) And again, in the first of the Catholic Epistles: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life." (1 Jn. 1:1)

who is to come. This is the Holy Spirit. For the Spirit did not only come on the day of Pentecost, as recorded in the Acts (chapter 2), but He continually comes to receive souls worthy of Him.

<u>Revelation 1:4b</u> ***and of the seven spirits which are before His throne***, he says.

The *seven spirits* are seven angels; not as equals or coeternal, associated with the Holy Trinity, but as genuine ministers and faithful servants. For the prophet says to God, “For all things are your servants.” (Ps. 118:91) And among all, the angels are included. And again, he says concerning them: Bless the Lord, all his powers, his ministers doing his will. (Ps. 102:21) In this form, the apostle also corresponded with Timothy by writing the first Epistle; " I seriously charge you," Paul says, "before God and Jesus Christ and the elect angels." (1 Tim. 5:21)

But also in what is said *before His throne*, He attested to them a domestic [οἰκετικὴν] and liturgical [λειτουργικὴν] order; however, not equality in rank.

> **<u>Revelation 1:5a</u> And from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth**, he says.

Having previously written about the incorporeal Word of God, and having spoken about Him as "He who was"; now John speaks about His incarnation, saying,

and from Jesus Christ, not dividing Him into two, but testifying both this and that about Him, that He is both the Word of the Father and that He was incarnate.

Who is a *faithful witness*; for according to the apostle, he bore witness before Pontius Pilate to the good confession. (1 Tim. 6:13)

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON 1 TIMOTHY 6:13
Who testified before Pontius Pilate. For Jesus testified concerning what he was doing, that he himself is the Christ, the Son of God. Therefore, Clement in the seventh book of Hypotyposes. ***the good confession***. What good confession does it speak of? In a somewhat mysterious way, however, Jesus confessed that he is God. For when Pilate said, "Are you a king?" he said, "For this I was born." (Jn. 18:37)

which *He was,* that he is God and Lord of all, even though he was incarnate.

And such *witness* is indeed true; for he speaks the truth and is worthy of faith.

the firstborn of the dead. This also Paul bears witness to, saying that "He is the first fruits, the firstborn from the dead." (Col. 1:18) He is called *the firstborn from the dead* as the one who has superiority in the common resurrection, and who has initiated for

us a new and living way, the resurrection from the dead, through the veil, that is, his flesh according to what is written. For all who rose from the dead before the Lord again fell under death; for that was not the true resurrection, but a temporary release from death. Therefore, none of them was called *firstborn from the dead*. But the Lord is called this, as having become the beginning and cause of the true resurrection. And just as having become a kind of first fruits of the resurrection of mankind, having become like one who also went before, as if from a certain threshing floor, from death to life. For concerning the Lord alone, the divine Paul wrote in his Epistle to the Romans, saying: “knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has dominion over him. For he who has died, has died once for sin; but he who lives, lives for God.” (Rom. 6:9-10)

and the ruler of the kings of the earth, Daniel also said this to the Babylonian: he says. “Until he says you will know that the Most High rules over the kingdom of heaven; and to whomsoever he will, he gives it.” (Dan. 5:22) Therefore, Christ reigns over all those things in Heaven. But now John speaks concerning those on earth; and going forward, he shows Him also reigning over the holy orders in Heaven.

> **<u>Revelation 1:5b-6</u>** ***To the one who loves us and has washed us from our sins in His blood; and has made us a kingdom, priests to His God and His prophets; to Him be glory and power forever and ever. Amen.***

The arrangement [σύνταξις] of the speech returns from the last to the first. He says to him, The *glory* and the *power* belong to the *one who loved us*; for how could he not have loved, “who gave himself as a ransom for the life of the world?" (1 Tim. 2:6)

and has washed us from our sins in His blood. For He Himself bore our handwritten record that was against us in the decrees; and He fastened it to the wood of His cross (Col. 2:14), stretching out our sins to His own death and freeing us by *His blood* from our offenses, "having subjected Himself to death, even death on a cross, (Philip. 2:8) to heal our disobedience.

and has made us a kingdom. And who says that in becoming *priests to His God and His prophets* there is benefit for us? For it was deemed fitting for men to obtain these things, securing for us the future kingdom and bestowing upon us an unfading glory even in the present time. For to *wash us from our sins in His own blood* is a greater and more marvelous gift, worthy of the divine grace. Moreover, that those who have offered nothing beforehand should become *priests of God and prophets* is a gift of such a kind.

> **Revelation 1:7** ***Behold, He comes with the clouds of heaven, and every eye shall see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn because of Him. Yes, amen.***

His coming upon *the clouds of heaven*, and the Lord Himself said concerning Himself in the Gospel according to Mark as follows: "And the powers in heaven will be shaken; and then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory." (Mark 13:25-26) For as I suppose it was written concerning His ascension into heaven on the day of the Ascension in the Acts, that a cloud received Him out of their sight, so He will come again with clouds. (Acts 1:9)[5]

5. Oecumenius Commentary on Acts 1:9
Acts 1:9a And having said these things, while they were watching, he was taken up; And having said these things, while they were watching, Jesus was taken up; leading them to another place on the shore, so that they would not question him again, he immediately began his ascent into heaven. And he adds, *while they were watching*:

since here the whole beginning of their faith and need was established, but not the end of the matter. For this reason also the angels explained that Jesus rests in heaven; for they were unable to see him that far away. In the resurrection, however, it was the opposite: the beginning indeed was not seen by them; for it would have been unnecessary, since the one who had risen appeared alive, and the tomb was empty; but the end was apparent, for the living one was revealed to them **Acts 1:9b** ***And a cloud received him out of their sight.*** Indeed, *a cloud received* the Lord, to demonstrate the equality of honor to the Father. For it is said of the Father: A cloud and darkness are round about Him. (Ps. 97:2) And indeed God who became flesh, having used a cloud as a chariot, for He was the Lord: but Elijah, fire. (2 Kings 2:1) For Jesus, being the Master of all, and ascending by his own power, takes a somewhat earthly and lower path toward the ascent, not being carried but carrying the vehicle; but Elijah is a servant, and therefore needing an unprofitable chariot and horses, the speed of which aids him in the upward journey. Therefore, it is said of him: Elijah went up in a whirlwind as into heaven; but of the Lord it is said, As He was going up into heaven. Two white-haired men are attested to confirm the Lord's restoration into heaven, because the word is established upon two or three witnesses.

I suppose, metaphorically, that the divine Scripture calls the holy angels "*clouds*" because of their lightness, their lofty nature, and their ability to walk on air [ἀεροβατές], as if it were saying that the Lord will come accompanied and attended by divine angels. For therefore the prophet also introduces Him, saying, "And he mounted upon the cherubim and flew; he flew upon the wings of the wind." (Ps. 17:11)

And he says, *every eye shall see Him, even those who pierced Him*. For He will not come in an obscure manner in his second glorious coming, nor secretly as before, when He lived among the world in the flesh; the prophet spoke of that coming, which is foreshadowed, saying: "He will descend like rain upon the mown grass, and like showers that water the earth." (Ps. 71:6) But openly and plainly, so as to be seen by every eye, even by the very sinful and wicked. Among these, those who have been led astray or turned away from him must be dealt with accordingly.

and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn because of Him, it says, referring clearly to those who have remained in unbelief and have not chosen to bow their own necks to the yoke of their Savior. But you will understand that *because of Him*, in his appearance and presence.

Then, to indicate what will certainly happen, he added *Yes, amen*, meaning exactly that these things will occur with absolute certainty; for just as among the Greeks the word "*yes*" [ναὶ] signifies assent to what is to come, so too among the Hebrews "*amen*" [ἀμὴν] serves this purpose.

<u>Revelation 1:8</u> ***I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord God; the one who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty, and Lord of creation.***

The alpha [α] signifies the beginning, *and the omega* [ω] signifies the end; therefore, basically He is saying, "I am the first and the last," indicating through the “first” the God *who is* without beginning, and through the “last,” the one *who is* without end. Since there is nothing among humans that is without a beginning and without end, In our case here, He used “the beginning and the end” instead of “being without beginning and without end.” This is also what God said through Isaiah: "I am the first God; and I am He who is to come." (Isa. 41:4)

He calls God *the Almighty and Lord of creation*, not only of the perceptible but also of the intelligible.

<u>Revelation 1:9a</u> ***I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and in the kingdom and patient endurance.***

John wrote to the faithful according to the message and preaching of Christ, that they suffer much from those who persecute the

godly; therefore, John considers himself a *companion in the sufferings* and *endurance*, and likewise *in the kingdom* of God. Here, those to be a *companion in the sufferings* for the sake of the message are called to share in it with Jesus.

Revelation 1:9b ***I was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.***

John says it is because *of Jesus*; for this is what the one in Jesus means.

And *because of His word and the testimony* which I bore by proclaiming His Gospel, John says, I became exiled *on the island of Patmos*. Eusebius[3] records that this happened to John in the Chronological Canon during the reign of Emperor Domitian. Then he says, while living on the aforementioned *island*,

Revelation 1:10a ***I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day.***

When John said, *I was in the Spirit* indicates a vision not perceptible to the senses, nor seen by the flesh or eyes, but rather by prophetic insight; concerning these spiritual perceptions Isaiah said: "He gave me understanding early on, He gave me an ear to hear, and the instruction of the Lord opened my ears." (Isa. 54:4)

Revelation 1:10b-11 ***And I heard a loud voice like a trumpet saying to me: John, write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus, and to Smyrna, and to Pergamum, and to Thyatira, and to Sardis, and to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.***

There are many cities in Asia, but he himself commands to write to those who have been taught by him and have already accepted

the faith of Christ. For what could one advise to those who are unbelieving and have turned away from the saving word?

> **<u>Revelation 1:12-16</u>** ***And I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me; and turning, I saw seven golden lampstands; and in the midst of the seven lampstands, one like a son of man clothed with a robe reaching down to the feet, and tightened at the breasts with a golden belt. His head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were like a flame of fire; and his feet were like gleaming bronze, refined as in a furnace; and his voice was like the sound of many waters; and he had seven stars in his right hand; and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword; and his face was like the sun shining in its power.***

The seven lampstands, as John himself goes on to explain, are the seven churches to which he has been commanded to write; he calls them *lampstands* because they bear the light of the glory of Christ. For he does not call them lamps, but *lampstands*. This lamp itself does not emit light; rather, it contains within itself the power to illuminate. Christ illuminates His churches spiritually. For just as the holy apostle encourages those who have received the faith: "Become like stars in the world, holding forth the word of life," (Philip. 2:15-16) so too, the star itself does not possess light by itself but is receptive to an external light. In the same way, here the evangelist saw the churches not as lamps themselves but as *lampstands*. For it has been said concerning Christ, "you wonderfully illuminate from eternal mountains," (Ps. 75:3) perhaps that means angelic powers; and again, towards the Father; "send forth your light and your truth" (Ps. 43:3); and again, the illumination of your face, O Lord. (Ps. 44:3) The participants in the divine light were recorded, some as stars, others as lamps.

John says that the *lampstands* are *golden* because it is honorable and surpassing to receive the divine radiance.

And he says that *in the midst of the seven lampstands, one like a son of man*; for if the Lord Himself promises to dwell and walk among the souls that received Him, how would He not be *seen in the midst of the lampstands*?

He says that the *Son of Man*, Christ, who humbled himself for us "taking the form of a servant," (Philip. 2:7) became the fruit of the womb according to the divine melody (Ps. 126:3); the womb of the undefiled and ever-virgin Mary; for since Mary is a human and our sister, it is fitting that the one born from her without seed, according to the flesh the Word of God, is called the *Son of Man*.

And he has spoken carefully without saying "the son of man", but *like a son of man*, and also God and Lord of all, Emmanuel; and the vision shows his varied form, outlining the shape from his works and powers.

And first, he puts on a priestly garment; for the long *robe* and the *belt* are priestly garments; for it is said to him from God and the Father: "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek." (Heb. 5:6; Ps. 109:4) But the apostle also calls Christ "a high priest and apostle of our confession," (Heb. 3:1) as one who performs priestly service and brings to himself and to the Father and the Spirit our confession of faith.

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS 3:1
"to the one who appointed him." What did he appoint? An *Apostle and High Priest*. Here he speaks not about essence, nor about divinity, but about human dignities.

And he puts on *a golden belt*, having a belt with decorated attire [φάρους], as prescribed by the law for priests. For it was necessary

for the difference between slaves and master to be shown, between the shadowy law and the truth in the New Covenant.

His head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow. For the mystery according to Christ is new in its appearance, but indeed eternal in its good pleasure. For the divine apostle wrote concerning him the mystery hidden from the ages and from the generations, which now has been revealed to his saints, to whom he willed. Therefore, the ancient aspect of the mystery, as far as it reached into divine favor, reveals the gray of the head intermingled with *wool* and *snow*.

and his eyes were like a flame. It is shown since Christ is also light, and He calls Himself this, saying "I am the light and the truth," (Jn. 8:12; 14:6) or He reveals the fearful things and the threat against the seven churches to which the things of the Revelation are sent, as those who are not following His laws perfectly. And He says,

his feet were like gleaming bronze. They say that the copper mined in Mount Lebanon is both pure and self-originating, becoming purer after being purified in a furnace from the moderate impurity within it; through this, the firm and unshakable faith in Christ, bright and visible, is shown to have been firmly established in safekeeping. For Christ has been called the rock [πέτρα] by the apostle (1 Cor. 10:4), and a precious stone [λίθος] in the foundations of Zion by Isaiah (Isa. 28:16). Or he means that the *gleaming bronze* is incense that is bronze-like, which the physicians [ἰατρῶν παῖδες] have been accustomed to call male [ἄρρενα].

But this one is fragrant when it is burning; for the burning *furnace* is a sign that it is being burned. It shows that the foundation of the evangelical proclamation; for the foundation of the rest of the body are the *feet*, which is Christ; for He is fragrant and, by fixing the spiritual fragrance, both the things in heaven and those on

earth. The foundation is Christ, and Paul refers to this in a certain letter he wrote to the Corinthians, wisely saying, "I have laid the foundation as an expert builder; another is building upon it. Each person must consider how they build upon it, for no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 3:10-11) That Christ is fragrant in a spiritual sense is attested by the bride in the Song of Songs, who, having received a share of His fragrance, declares both that "the scent of your perfumes is more delightful than all spices" and that "your name is like a poured-out perfume." (Song 1:3) Moreover, the Lord Himself presents Himself as fragrant in His words to the bride, saying, "I am the flower of the field, the lily of the valleys." (Song 2:1) What then? Did not Paul also, having become fragrant from the participation [μετουσίας] in Christ, say: "that we are the fragrance of Christ?" (2 Cor. 2:15) And again: "and the aroma of the knowledge of Him is revealed to us." (2 Cor. 2:14)

and his voice was like the sound of many waters, John said; and rightly so. For how else could his utterance have reached every part of the earth, and the proclamation about him to the ends of the inhabited world, if it were not unheard of? Not by audible loudness, but by the power of the proclamation.

and he had seven stars in his right hand, he said. He himself interprets these stars as the angels of the seven churches, as the divine Gregory[4] said in the presence of the bishops, addressing the ruling angels; "for I believe that each church is guarded by a different angel, as John teaches in the Revelation." I believe that the *stars* are called the holy angels because of the abundant illumination of Christ within them; and they *are in His right hand*. For they are deemed worthy of the most honorable position before God, and as if they rest in the hand of God.

and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword. Therefore, the divine David says to the Lord, "Fix your sword upon your

thigh, O mighty one." (Ps. 44:4) For at that time, the evangelical laws commanded us to observe them strictly, for violating them was deadly; therefore, the place of the thigh where the sword was placed indicated a delay in punishment, for it was not yet fully prepared for slaughter. Now from *his mouth* comes forth the *sword*, signifying the riddle [αἰνίγματος] that those who are disobedient to the evangelical commandments face the danger of being cut in two by the sword of the soul. This is what the Lord declares in the Gospels, making this clear; and the apostle said: "for the word of God is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword" (Heb.4:12) against those who disobey, clearly indicating the threat it raises. Therefore, this sharpness is also attributed to John; it is the same as the sharp style found in the writings of Paul.

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS 4:12
"*sharper than any two-edged sword*." As those who did not hear the speech might fear something more terrible, it expresses what has been said, adapting examples that are among us: for it could not be understood in any other way than what is said, cutting from both sides with any sword… The division that the Gospels threaten, the Fathers understood as the complete abandonment of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, I think it is now a day that causes the separation of the Holy Spirit, and it removes itself from the soul, after which all good things will subsequently follow and be taken away.

and his face was like the sun shining in its power, John said. Well said, *like the sun*; for the Lord is "the sun of righteousness," according to the prophet Malachi. (Mal. 4:2) But so that you do not think the illumination of Christ's *face*, which enlightens every person coming into the world (Jn. 1:9), is a physical body that is transparent and visibly shining, he attributed it to his power, as if to say: the light of Christ is intelligible, operating by power (Col. 1:29), not a bodily appearance, but one that enlightens the eyes of the soul.

Revelation 1:17-19 ***And when I saw him*****,** he said***, I fell at his feet as though dead. And he placed his right hand upon me, saying, "Do not be afraid[6]. I am the First and the Last, and the Living One; I was dead, and behold, I am alive forever and ever, and I hold the keys of death and Hades." Write, then, what you have seen and what is, and what will happen afterward.***

It is customary for the holy prophets to see a vision and be struck with awe, revealing human weakness; and how much the divine surpasses the human and excels it with incomparable differences. This we also know from Joshua the son of Nave, when he saw the chief commander of the Lord's army (Jos. 1:9), and Daniel the man of desires in the visions that appeared to him. (Dan. 10:11; 8:17)

I, therefore, *fell at his feet as though dead*, says the evangelist, struck with awe at the vision.

And he placed his right hand upon me, saying, "Do not be afraid." The holy John could not have survived the terror if he had not leaned upon the saving right hand of the Son of God, which alone worked the greatest wonders by touch; and he says to me,

I am the first and the last. Thus he spoke: "I am the one who, at the end of the ages, came to dwell with you in the flesh for the salvation of all of you, *I am the first* and the firstborn of all creation (Col. 1:15). How then could it be possible for you to suffer any harm from my presence?" For if, being alive and the source of life, I became dead for your sake and again came to life after having trampled down death, how is it possible for you, who are alive through me and through my vision, to become dead?

If *I* too *hold the keys to death and Hades*, so that I may kill or bring to life whomever I wish, leading them down to Hades and raising them up according to what is written about me, and as the

prophet says, the pathways of death belong to me (Prov. 12:28), I would not send my worshippers and disciples prematurely to death. Since he will not die, he says:

Write, then, what you have seen and what is, and what will happen afterward. In speaking of what is, he reveals both what has passed and what is present; and in speaking of what is about to happen, he reveals the future. For among the things seen in the holy vision, some were already accomplished, although they had reached their limit, they had not ceased to exist; therefore, concerning these things, he spoke of *what is*, meaning what was present. As for *what will happen*, the word would show it as it unfolded.

> **Revelation 1:20** He says that ***the mystery concerns the seven stars you saw on my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands. The seven stars are the angels of the churches; and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.***

Since it was revealed to him who the *stars* are and what the *lampstands* represent, he then proceeds to instruct what each *of the churches* must bear witness to, and how to hold accountable the one that is fully straying from the divine purpose; while praising those that, at least in part, faithfully uphold the precision of the Gospel laws. And to correct those who have erred in other matters, Christ, "who desires all to be saved" (1 Tim. 2:4) and to become heirs of His own good things and partners, appointed the divine evangelist to send the appropriate word and teaching to each of the churches as a remedy; to Him be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Translator's notes for chapter 1.

1. This comment by Oecumenius gives us a basic idea when Oecumenius wrote his commentary on Revelation. John is thought to have written his commentary around 90A.D., but it depends upon when Oecumenius assumed that John wrote the book of Revelation. So it would be at least the 6th century when Oecumenius wrote it.

2. Athanasius, Ep. 39.

3. Eusebius of Caesarea, Paschal Chronicle 250c.

4. Gregory of Nazianzus, Orationes 42.9.

5. Oecumenius, in his commentary on Acts 1:9 says… And having said these things, while they were watching, Jesus was taken up; leading them to another place on the shore, so that they would not question him again, he immediately began his ascent into heaven. And he adds, while they were watching: since here the whole beginning of their faith and need was established, but not the end of the matter. For this reason also the angels explained that Jesus rests in heaven; for they were unable to see him that far away. In the resurrection, however, it was the opposite: the beginning indeed was not seen by them; for it would have been unnecessary, since the one who had risen appeared alive, and the tomb was empty; but the end was apparent, for the living one was revealed to them… Indeed, a cloud received the Lord, to demonstrate the equality of honor to the Father. For it is said of the Father: A cloud and darkness are round about Him. (Ps. 97:2) And indeed God who became flesh, having used a cloud as a chariot, for He was the Lord: but Elijah, fire. (2 Kings 2:1) For Jesus, being the Master of all, and ascending by his own power, takes a somewhat earthly and lower path toward the ascent, not being carried but carrying the vehicle; but Elijah is a servant, and therefore needing an unprofitable chariot and horses, the speed of which aids him in the upward journey. Therefore, it is said of him: Elijah went up in a whirlwind as into heaven; but of the Lord it is said, As He was going up into heaven. Two white-haired men are attested to confirm the Lord's restoration into heaven, because the word is established upon two or three witnesses.

6. The oldest Oecumenius manuscript does not have "Do not be afraid." But manuscripts 203 and 240 has that reading, and it is also in the comments below by Oecumenius.

[Second Discourse]

CHAPTER 2

The first act of my words and interpretations has indeed been accomplished; now again another target must be struck, showing what is the exhortation to the churches. Therefore, first to the church in Ephesus, as presiding over the rest of Asia, it is commanded to write, saying therefore:

> **Revelation 2:1-7** ***To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: I know your works and your labor and your patience, and that you cannot bear evil men, and you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them to be liars; and you have patience and have endured for my name's sake, and have not grown fatigued. But I have this against you, that you have abandoned your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen, and repent, and do the works you did at first; or else I am coming to you, and I will remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. Nevertheless, you have this in your favor[1], that you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of my[2] God.***

He referred to *the church in Ephesus* in an indirect way[3] as *the angel of the church in Ephesus*. For his angel, the protector of the church, has not sinned in a way that requires repentance upon hearing; he is the most holy one and, because of this, being at the

right hand of the Lord, he bears this sign of his natural purity and radiant brilliance. Why was it necessary to say to the one who was exchanging words to *write* to the evangelist? For the divine angel was present and heard the things being said; for he was on the right hand of the one speaking, and finally, the holy one himself, interpreting the vision shown to him, says: *He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches*. For he did not say this to the angels of the churches, but to the churches themselves. Therefore, in the other visions wherever you find them, write these things to the angel of this church, that the words are not about the angel, but about the church. What does he command to be written to the church in Ephesus?

These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands. It is similar to saying, "this is what the one who surrounds, holds sway over, and binds together both the holy angels in heaven and the men on earth," *for these are the seven stars*. For these are *the seven lampstands*, as has been said before; because *He walks in the midst of* those who worship Him, and through the prophet He says: "I will dwell among them and walk among them." (Lev. 26:12)

He says, *I know your works and your labor and your patience,* "and nothing of the good things you do has escaped my notice." (Job 34:21) The one who formed the hearts of you all, who understands all your works (Ps. 32:15), and who says *that you cannot bear evil men*, has given you a spirit of perseverance.

and you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them to be liars. The believers in Ephesus fulfilled the divine command: "not to trust every spirit, but to test the spirits to see whether they are from God." (1 Jn. 4:1) Therefore, they tested those who were preaching the Gospel among them and put them to the test; they found some false apostles who were delivering spurious doctrines, and he says that those around

Cerinthus, who were contemporaries of the evangelist, were proclaimers of profane doctrines.

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON 1 JOHN 4:1
After John has completed his discourse on love for one's neighbor, and has demonstrated that this is a sign of the permanence of the Spirit we have received, he now adds a judgment concerning those who are truly brothers and neighbors, so that having this, we do not fall into the occasion of the commandment of love concerning false brothers, false apostles, and *false prophets*, bringing great harm upon ourselves from this. Indeed, by embracing them as if they were of similar character, we will first harm ourselves while we communicate with those who are faithless, and we present holy things to dogs (Matt. 7:6): then, to those who associate with us, our love towards them will persuade many to take them as teachers and to believe what is said by them, while not observing, as if they were stealthily drawn away because of their conduct with us, and what is the indication of these.

He says*, and you have patience and have endured for my name's sake, and have not grown fatigued*, and you have done well indeed; for it is said, “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of God.” (Gal. 6:2)

He says, *but I have this against you, that you have abandoned your first love*. *Remember therefore from where you have fallen, and repent, and do the works you did at first in righteousness*. As he says, “your good deeds have not escaped me,” (Job. 34:21) likewise, you have not ceased your love for those in need. Therefore, return to the previous kindness taught by me, which you have neglected. He said, "See that you do not turn back from where you have gone out.”

I am coming to you, and I will remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. The *coming to you* does not indicate a transitional [μεταβατικὸν] movement, since God fills all things, but rather a turning as if from patience to punishment.

The *removal of the lampstand*, or rather the church, he says is its own abandonment which occurs against those who sin; in

everything, they are thrown into confusion and turmoil, as it is also said: "My eye has been troubled in my anger; and my heart within me was troubled." (Ps. 30:103 54:4)

He says, *nevertheless, you have this in your favor, that you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate*. He placed the fault of the two achievements in the middle, so that from the praises at the extremes, he might console the blame in the middle, so that no one would be overwhelmed by the greater sorrow. Now, as for Nicolaus, the one for whom we are speaking, he became an arch-heretic[5] [αἱρεσιάρχης], blasphemous and detestable. Therefore, those descended from him, turning away from those evils, found praise in Ephesus through Christ. Then, after the oracle, the evangelist sets forth his own, saying,

He who has an ear, that is, one who is obedient, and who obeys divine laws, *let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches*. *The Spirit says*, either that the things of the Revelation were being accomplished in the Spirit, or that the Spirit refers to Christ, as He is and is understood to be God, just as a servant and the Son of Man speaks as he is and is understood to be a man. For the Godhead [θεότης] has been said to be spirit in general, as the Lord Himself says to the Samaritan woman He was speaking with: “God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” (Jn. 4:24) What then does the Spirit say?

To the one who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of my God. This is a figurative expression; for *the tree of life* refers to the blessed and everlasting life, which the saints will enjoy in the kingdom of God, which is now called *Paradise*. For indeed, those here are said to be worthy as victors over the enemy and as avengers in these trials. But indeed, for the Lord to say, *of my God*, let no one be caused to stumble; for it is necessary, according to the economy [οἰκονομίᾳ] of the flesh, that all humble words be observed. For indeed He also

said in the Gospel: "I am going to my Father, and your Father, and my God, and your God." (Jn. 20:17) These things were conveyed to the church of Ephesus.

> **Revelation 2:8-11** He says, ***And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: These are the words of the First and the Last, who died and came to life again. I know your affliction and your poverty, yet you are rich. I also know about the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. Do not fear anything of what you are about to suffer; behold, the Devil is about to throw some of you into prison, so that you may be tested; and you will have a trial for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who conquers will not be harmed by the second death.***

First, meaning that the Lord calls Himself by the essence of the Godhead [τῆς θεότητος]; *Last*, indeed, meaning, by the incarnation and the economy with the flesh.

He who is said to have *died and came to life again*; he who is said to have come to the experience of death, and by death has destroyed death (2 Tim. 1:10).

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON 2 TIMOTHY 1:10
Already long ago it was prefigured that we would be saved, but now it has been revealed through the incarnation of our Savior God. For such is the will of God, that the world should be saved through faith, now and not at another time, it has now been revealed. **who abolished death.** To the one who forgives sin, and granted resurrection.

I know your affliction and your poverty, yet you are rich, yet do not say anything like the disobedient Jews said who rejected the

faith, “that we have fasted and you did not notice, we have humbled our souls and you did not pay attention.” (Isa. 58:3) But he says *you are rich* because you have Christ as your wealthy protector, even though he became poor for our sake (2 Cor. 8:9) by taking the form of a servant (Philip. 2:7).

And *the slander* of the illegitimate *Jews* is interpreted as the confession of Judas. Therefore, the true Jews, and the spiritual Israel[6], would be those who confess Christ, and Israel are those who see God in spirit. “For the one who is a Jew outwardly is not a Jew, nor is circumcision that is outward in the flesh” pleasing to God, as Paul says, “but the one who is a Jew inwardly, and circumcision is of the heart,” not of the flesh. (Rom. 2:28) Therefore, the Jews who have remained in unbelief form a blasphemous *synagogue*, led by *Satan*.

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON ROMANS 2:28-29
Next he defines who is truly a Jew and who is truly circumcised. And it seems he does not reject the Jew, but the transgressor: yet this much he most strongly opposes them, indicating that they do everything for display. ***"Nor the circumcision which is in the flesh, visible."*** Having said this he cast away all bodily things. ***“A Jew inwardly.”*** As in the spiritual Jew. ***“And circumcision.”*** For, he says, there is no need to circumcise the flesh of the foreskin, but to circumcise the heart from evil deeds. And having said, ***“In the spirit,”*** he makes progress by faith. For the faithful, through the Holy Spirit, have the circumcision of sins. He says, He whose heart is cut off from all impurity. For this is the true Jew, the one who fulfills the law. ***"Whose praise is not from men, but from God."*** For the hidden and inward circumcision there will be no human praise, but God who examines hearts and reins.

Do not fear anything, he says, *of what you are about to suffer*. *behold, the Devil is about to throw some of you into prison, so that you may be tested*; *and you will have a trial for ten days*. For indeed by the power of the Devil, men do evil to the godly. But God consents, testing them more thoroughly through trials. But take heart, he says, your suffering is brief and short-lived.

Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. This is true: for it has been said, "He who endures to the end will be saved," (Matt. 10:22) but not the one who throws their shield [ῥίψασπις[7]] and, having grown weak, turns away from the struggles.

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who conquers will not be harmed by the second death. What has been said is very precise; for in the first death, which is the separation of the soul from the body, all alike, both the righteous and the sinners, become prisoners, so that the divine decree may reach its end: “you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” (Gen. 3:19) But in the second death, which the Lord calls sin, saying, "Let the dead bury their own dead," (Matt. 8:22) the victors over temptations would not be wronged.

Revelation 2:12-17 ***And to the angel*** he says***, write to the church in Pergamum: These are the words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword: I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is; and you hold fast my name, and did not deny my faith even in the days of Antipas my faithful witness, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. But I have a few things against you: you have some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and commit sexual immorality. So you also have some who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans in the same way. Repent therefore; if not, I will come to you soon and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name***

written which no one knows except the one who receives it.

And to the church in Pergamum write: I am the one who has the *sword* coming out of my mouth, so that I may avenge those who violate my commandments; for the danger of those who do not obey the divine commands is signified by *the sword* in the *mouth*.

He says *where you dwell, where Satan's throne is*. For all of Asia is indeed full of idols, especially Pergamum. But he also says that dwelling in such a place, you have kept my faith unshaken, not deviating at all toward the evil counsel of the many, but even opposing it during the days and festivals of the idols, as my *faithful witness* who has spoken boldly in my name says, you came as far as you could against those plotting, guarding the truth until death. And since he also touches on the most holy covenant, and we all sin greatly according to what is written to you (James 3:2), and yet being such, he says, "I have the right to accuse."

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON JAMES 3:2
That no man can lead a life without sin is confirmed by the slipperiness of the tongue. From the same, it also demonstrates that no one can attain perfection. For who is there who has not erred through his tongue?

For *you have some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and commit sexual immorality. So you also have some who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans in the same way*. Balak, therefore, taught him in the manner of a teacher who became guide to Balaam. According to both Balaam and Balak, the story is clearly established in the book of Numbers, which is the book of Numbers written by the wisest Moses. Josephus records[8] that by the counsel of Balaam, the Midianites were sent against Israel into fornication, calling them

to apostasy from God. He says that those who come from Nicolaus do such things and you do not drive them away from yourself.

Then he says, *Repent therefore; if not, I will come to you soon and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth*. O depth of the riches and wisdom, and goodness of God. (Rom. 11:33) For he did not say, "I am coming to fight against you," but rather, "I will fight against them," clearly referring to the Nicolaitans. For he spared among those in Pergamum who were faithful and devout.

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. *To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna* of the mystery. He said, in an indirect way[9], that he would grant him to be filled with the intelligible and future goods.

and I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except the one who receives it. For it has been said, “what no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor has entered into the heart of man, what God has prepared for those who love Him.” (1 Cor. 2:9)

Revelation 2:18-29 ***And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like gleaming bronze; I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first. But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols. I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality. Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her***

deeds. I will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works. But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden. Only hold fast what you have until I come. The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father. And I will give him the morning star. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

The declaration of the proper title [προσηγορίας] is made clearer by the one who communicates with the evangelist.

He says*, These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire*, symbolizing the awe-inspiring and threatening judgment against sinners.

and His feet are like gleaming bronze, symbolizing the firmness of faith in him and unwavering steadfastness, or the spiritual fragrance of the evangelical doctrines as described above[10].

He said, *I know your works, your love and faith and service*, just as he said, I praise all your efforts. For he puts "I know," instead of, "I praise," like, "I know you to be spoken of among all men" to Moses, (Ex. 33:12) and "the Lord knows the way of the righteous." (Ps. 1:6) And he says that *service* is assistance to those in need.

And he says *that your latter works exceed the first*; it shows that as they went on, they themselves became greater in fulfilling the commandments;

But I have this against you that you; this is to show that only God is completely blameless.

What do I have against you? *That you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess*, that you do not persecute [διώκεις] her. From Jezebel, who dwelt with Ahab, she who is continually a demonstration of wickedness. She says that she herself is a *prophetess*; she teaches and leads many astray into fornication and eating food sacrificed to idols.

She *who calls herself a prophetess*; she teaches and leads many astray *to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols*. This means either sensual fornication or the apostasy from God, according to what has been said: "and they committed fornication in their practices" (Ps. 106:39); and again "they committed adultery with the trees." (Jer. 3:9) But the Lord, not wishing the death of the sinner, but rather repentance and life, says that He has given her an opportunity for repentance. But if *she refuses to repent*, then I will do these things to her and those who commit adultery with her, so that all may know that I am God.

For God *who searches mind and heart*. For it is said, "For God searches the minds and hearts," (Jer. 17:10) They have nothing in common with the adulterous woman; being simpler and not knowing the schemes of the wicked, for this reason, they say: I will not impose any further burden on you; simplicity is sufficient for you. But you must continue in the teaching what you have received until my second coming.

And to the one who overcomes the evil one, *I will give authority over the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father*. This is what is spoken of in the Gospels by those who have well managed the trusts and the talents entrusted to them. "Be in charge of ten cities"; and there will "be another in charge of five cities." (see Luke 19:17,19) And to

Daniel, “and the kingdom shall be given to the saints of God.” (Dan. 7:22) For it indicates a certain beginning and authority given to the saints over those who are inferior and in need of guidance. Therefore, he says that he shepherds them with strict authority, but the disobedient he will crush like earthenware vessels.

And I will give him the morning star, says the prophet concerning the Assyrian or Satan, “How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn!” (Isa. 14:12) He is still called the *morning star*; therefore, he says, I will give Satan into the hand of my servants. Similar to what is said by the apostle: “God will soon crush Satan under your feet.” (Rom. 16:20) And, “on an asp and a basilisk[11] you will tread, and you will trample a lion and a dragon.” (Ps. 90:13)

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON ROMANS 16:20
"Crush." It was far greater than to subject. ***“Satan.”*** He says that not only will he crush the scandals by intervening, but also their commander Satan himself. *[Oecumenius quoting Severian of Gabala]*

Translator’s notes for chapter 2.

1. “in your favor” [ἀγαθόν], literally means “good thing” or “to your benefit”. This reading is not in the common Greek text.

2. “my” is added by Oecumenius.

3. “in an indirect way” [περιφραστικῶς]. This Greek word literally translates as “periphrastically” or “circumlocutorily.”

4. [Μεταβατικὸν] is a Greek word meaning "transitional" or "transitory." It can be used in different grammatical cases to describe something that is a stage of change or that does not last.

5. “arch-heretic” [αἱρεσιάρχης] In Christian theology, a heresiarch or arch-heretic, is an originator of heretical doctrine, or the founder of a sect that sustains such a doctrine. Heresy is belief or opinion contrary to orthodox religious (especially Christian) doctrine.

6. “Therefore, the true Jews, and the spiritual Israel, would be those who confess Christ, and Israel are those who see God in spirit.” Perhaps Oecumenius has Gal. 6:14-16 in mind here, “But far be it from me to boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.”

7. “abandons” [ῥίψασπις] ῥίψασπις is a Greek word that literally translates to "shield-flinger" or "shield-thrower" and was used as a term of reproach for a coward who abandoned their shield in battle. It refers to a soldier who fled from combat, casting aside their primary defensive gear. This was considered a deeply shameful act, particularly in cultures with a strong emphasis on military honor and duty, like ancient Sparta.

8. Josephus, On the Antiquities of the Jews 4.126-140.

9. “in an indirect way” [περιφραστικῶς] The same expression is used in 2:1. This Greek word literally translates as “periphrastically” or “circumlocutorily.”

10. “Above”, that is, chapter 1 verse 15 comments by Oecumenius.

11. “basilisk” [βασιλίσκον] In European histories and legends, a basilisk is a legendary reptile reputed to be a serpent king, who causes death to those who look into its eyes.

CHAPTER 3

Revelation 3:1-6 ***And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: These are the words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars: I know your works, that you have a name like you are alive, but you are dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die; for I have not found your works perfect before God. Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast, and repent. If therefore you will not***

watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you. Nevertheless, you have a few names in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy. He who overcomes shall be clothed with a white garment, and I will not blot out his name from the book of life; but I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Concerning the seven stars, which are now also called *the spirits of God*, it has been said in the preceding passages; but now you must listen to what he says about those *in Sardis*.

He says, *I know your works, that you have a name like you are alive*, and you have the life according to God, the virtuous life, *but you are dead* because of your sins. For to be called *dead* in sins is the custom according to the divine Scripture, as is shown by what is written concerning those who have turned from unbelief to the faith in Christ by the most wise Paul: "And you, being dead in your trespasses, He made alive together with Christ." (Eph. 2:5) And the Shepherd[1] says that some have descended into the water of the pool[2] [κολυμβήθρας], obviously dead, and have risen alive.

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON EPHESIANS 2:5
"Even when we were dead." Dead with respect to any good action. This, however, he says, was done on account of our sins. ***"He made us alive together with Christ."*** Again, he brings Christ into the discussion, making the matter worthy of belief.

But he says, Awaken from the sleep of sin *and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die*. Moreover, he says, short tasks and incomplete practices remain for you, having not fully died. Therefore, guard these things while alive, flowing already toward death. For to *strengthen* means to stabilize and support what is slack and prone to collapse. For none of your

efforts is complete, but some have died, and others are about to die. Therefore, *how you have received* the faith and *heard* the word concerning it, and some of your works still live in your life. But *repent* concerning those that have died.

If therefore you will not watch, he says, and become like one who rises from sleep in sluggishness, I will come to you as a punisher when you do not expect it. The holy apostle also speaks concerning other matters: "But when they say, 'Peace and safety,' then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman." (1 Thess. 5:3)

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON 1 THESSALONIANS 5:3
For it has been said that, *The day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night;* and it is fitting both for the general end and for the end of each individual. For when they say, ***"Peace and safety,"*** this is also spoken to soothe them. For in case, he says, because those who afflict you live in prosperity, they should expect that the end will neither come nor approach — for it will certainly come — ***"then sudden destruction will come upon them."*** So that the punishment of the unjust and the greedy may not be altogether without relief, and also so that, not foreseeing the end, those more powerful, rushing upon the weaker with utter ruthlessness and inhumanity, may drive them into blasphemy and despair. And how does he say that destruction will come suddenly, coming from the Flood and from the Antichrist? We say that these are signs of the end, but not of the presence of Christ yet. For it will be sudden. ***"He will repay each one according to his works."*** And the example of one in ***labor pains*** was well placed. For even this has many signs of childbirth, but not of the hour or the day. Otherwise, and because of the sharpness of the pain, it would have come into this midst. But Christ and my God, speaking of the end, used the example of Lot and Noah. These things concern the common end. As for the individual end of each person, there is no doubt that it will be so. ***"And they will not escape."*** The toil and destruction of those who speak of *peace and security*. He is speaking about sinners.

He says, *Nevertheless, you have a few names in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy*, whom I say I am now postponing and patiently enduring for you. The *garments not defiled* refer to the bodies of the saints according to what was said by the patriarch

Jacob; he washes his robe in wine (Gen. 49:11); and Isaiah says the same: Why are your garments red, as if they were stained in a winepress? (Isa. 63:2-3) The *white* garment thus symbolizes the purity of the body.

The one *who overcomes* is said to be *clothed with white garments* in the coming age. For indeed, he himself promises in the Gospels that the saints will shine like the sun and the moon (Matt. 13:43); but the pure ones are said to be written in *the book of life*, that blessed and everlasting life. The Lord mentioned this inscription also in the Gospels, saying to His disciples: "Do not rejoice that the demons are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in Heaven." (Luke 10:20)

And he says, *but I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels*. He will confess them as faithful servants and as favorable household servants. For it is also said in the Gospels: "Whoever confesses me before men, I will also confess before my Father who is in Heaven." (Matt. 10:32) And to speak concerning the Father and His angels does not exclude that the holy angels are also His; for sometimes they are of the Father, and sometimes of Himself. For it is said in Matthew: “Then the Son of Man will send out his angels with a great trumpet call; and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.” (Matt. 24:31)

Revelation 3:7-13 ***And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These things says the Holy One, the True One, He who holds the key of David, He who opens and no one will shut, and He who shuts, and no one opens: I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it, because you have a little power, and have kept My word, and have not denied My name[3]. Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of***

Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie; behold, I will make them come and worship before your feet, and know that I have loved you. Because you have kept the word of My patience, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth. Behold, I come quickly; hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

To those *in Philadelphia, it says, write: These things says the Holy one, the True one*. *The Holy one* is indeed the Son of God. Then this is also testified by the Seraphim, who unite a threefold "holy" into one lordship, having nothing earthly or sinful, even though the Word became flesh. "For he committed no sin. Nor was deceit found in his mouth," according to the voice of the prophet Isaiah. (Isa. 53:9) And it is true that it is also said, *the True one*; and He also is called God, and the title is not false. For God is truly Emmanuel, even if the accursed Nestorius does not wish this; He became man without ceasing to be God, and He is truly man, even if the God-hated [θεοστυγὴς] Eutyches finds this difficult. Which is truly the case, and nothing but a matter of fact, not as the Nestorians claim by way of allegory, nor as the Eutychians assert by opinion or imagination, nor the accursed and detestable race of the Manichaeans.

He says *He who holds the key of David*. To *hold the key* means to hold authority. For the one entrusted with the *key* of the house is given the authority to *open* and to *shut*. And this is clearly demonstrated in the Gospels in the promises made to Peter. "For I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever

you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matt. 16:19) Since therefore the *key* signifies authority, the one *who holds the key of David* clearly indicates that just as David reigned over the physical Israel, so too I reign over both the physical and the spiritual Israel, although the nature of the authority is exchanged with incomparable superiority. For what equality is there between man and God? This was also proclaimed by the divine angel Gabriel to the virgin concerning the Lord, saying, "And the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father; and he shall reign over the house of David forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end." (Luke 1:32-33) Since Christ founded [ἐφεῦρεν] a likeness to the kingdom of David, it is fittingly said by the one *who holds the key of David*. Then, having remained firm in the manner of the key, He brings it forward:

He who opens and no one will shut; *and He who shuts, and no one opens*. For if God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? If God is the one who condemns; who is the one who justifies? For He says to open and to shut, means to justify and to condemn.

He says, *I know your works*, that you are godly; and *I have set before you an open door*. And he said beforehand: The one who opens, and no one shuts, so also the door which I have given opened, *and no one can shut it*. *Because,* he says, *you have a little power, and have kept My word, and have not denied My name*. Philadelphia is a small city, therefore its strength is also small. But in guarding the faith of Christ beyond her own strength, she rose as unyielding, to remain among those who trouble the faithful. Then, as a recompense for her genuine loyalty to Him, he promises that many from the Jewish census [καταλόγου] will run to join her and receive the faith of Christ. For this act of worshiping at her feet signifies that even in the last times, to be chosen and appointed as a member of the church is to be part of the church.

The prophet, embracing this, said: “I chose to be cast down in the house of my God rather than to dwell in the tents of sinners.” (Ps. 83:11)

Because you have kept the word of My patience, I also will keep you from the hour of trial. He speaks of the persecution of Christians that occurred under Emperor Domitian, who was the second persecutor after Nero, as Eusebius[4] records in both his Ecclesiastical History and his Chronicon Canon. It was during this time that the divine evangelist was condemned to live on Patmos, a small and deserted island.

I am coming quickly, he says, having taken hold of you.

hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. And what do you hold fast? The genuine love toward the Lord, evidently, in which, having persevered until the end, you will receive the crown of life (James 1:12). For to those who endure, belong the victories;

and *he who overcomes,* he says, that he will make them to sit with him always in the sight of God; for this is to become the *pillar of the* divine *temple*. For the *pillar* could never *go out* for any good reason from the place in which it is fixed.

I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, and My new name. Through all this, the enjoyment of God and dwelling in goodness and blessedness are fully revealed, whatever they will possess in the age to come. And he says that the *name* is new, one that has perhaps not yet been heard, which the saints reigning with Christ receive, being called friends (Jn. 15:15), brothers (Heb. 2:11), and servants (1 Cor. 4:1). And indeed, he also receives a *new name* beyond these things. For some have been recorded in the divine Scripture and have come to the hearing of men; but the *new name* is nowhere named.

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS 2:11
"I will put my trust in him." Since he previously called Him brother and internally father, he signifies that these indeed are names of kindness and grace, but by nature and truth, God is, he says. For who trusts in anyone else except in God alone? And if he were to say: Do not think that hearing Him being called brother and father refers to someone among the common people, God is, he says, in whom it is written that one must trust.

And it is not unworthy for him to be called *My God*, nor are the measures of emptiness or the humility of human nature to be despised. For if he were unworthy, who compelled him to be united with flesh in hypostasis[5] [ὑπόστασιν], and thus to weave our salvation? To Him be glory forever and ever.

[Third Discourse]

It has been decreed that the six cities, for which I have already spoken in the second chapter concerning Ephesus, as well as Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, and Philadelphia, be sent forth.

> **Revelation 3:14-22** ***Now write these things that must be written. And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These things says the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God: I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I am about to vomit you out of my mouth. Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, so that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint***

your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with me. To the one who conquers, I will grant the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

These things says the Amen. This is equivalent to what the True one says (Rev. 3:7), as explained above.

For *Amen* means Yes. Yes, for in Him there is neither no nor anything contrary concerning what is spoken about Him[6] (2 Cor 1:19). And *the faithful witness* has been mentioned above (Rev. 2:13). Therefore, it is unnecessary to speak twice about the same things.

He says He *is the beginning of the creation of God*. Perhaps the group[7] [ἐργαστήριον] of the Christ-fighting [χριστομάχον] Arians would interpret this passage as referring to the Son as a creation written through these things. But let us not pay attention to their impious words. It must be examined whether something similar is found in another place in Scripture, so that one may regulate similar things from similar terms. The wise apostle says concerning the Son, writing to the Colossians, "who is the first fruits" (1 Cor. 15:23) ... "the firstborn of all creation," (Col. 1:15) but not the first created.

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON COLOSSIANS 1:15
He says he was begotten before all creation, both visible and invisible, ***"the firstborn of all creation."*** That is, begotten as firstborn and without origin before all creation.

And the prophet says: "From the womb before the morning star I have begotten you," (Ps. 109:3) not "created you." But also Solomon: "Before all the mountains I was born of him." (Prov. 8:25) For "the Lord created me as the beginning of His ways," (Prov. 8:22) over the spiritually ensouled [ἐμψυχωμένου] body of the Lord, which Gregory[8] took up among the saints in his discourse "On the Son". And He begets, in accordance with His divinity. Therefore, concerning the generation and not the creation of all things, as those who teach about the only-begotten Word and Son have dogmatized, what does it mean in the present context to say *the beginning* [ἀρχὴν] *of the creation of God*? Nothing other than the ruler of God's creation, and He who holds the principle [ἀρχὴν] over all things. Since the Father has made all things through the Son, it is fitting that the Creator [ποιητὴς] of all and Maker[9] [δημιουργός], who brought all things into being from non-being, should rule over those born of Him.

He says, *I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot*. The one with zeal is *hot* with the Spirit; for the divine apostle says that "those who are living with the Spirit" (Rom. 12:11) are *hot*. *Cold*, however, is the one deprived of the Holy Spirit, of its energy and presence.

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON ROMANS 12:11
"Be not lazy in diligence," for this too begets love, whenever we not only honor but also strive eagerly. ***"Being zealous in spirit."*** And how will this be? If we live in good works, we will have the Holy Spirit fervent and continually warmed within us. ***"Serving the Lord."*** For through the things said, the disposition to serve the Lord will be born in us. Thus we truly appear to serve the Lord through good works. This is true service. ***"Rejoicing in hope."*** How could the Spirit be fervent? If you rejoice in hope, he says. For nothing makes one so ready for all things as a good hope. And if, he says, you endure afflictions, and if you have unceasing prayer. ***"Enduring in affliction."*** For endurance produces trial.

Because, he says, that *you are lukewarm*. *Lukewarm* is called the one who has indeed received the Holy Spirit through baptism, but

has extinguished the gift through negligence and concern for temporary matters. This is also a divine command: “Do not quench the Spirit.” (1 Thess. 5:19)

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON 1 THESSALONIANS 5:19
"Do not quench the Spirit." For since the present life proceeds in darkness, God has given us the lamp of the Holy Spirit illuminating our ruling faculty. Therefore, he says, do not quench this grace of the Spirit like the five virgins (see Matt. 25). An unclean life and merciless disposition extinguish it and render it inactive. Or in another way: there were among them prophets and false prophets, but who the True One was before the manifestation was unknown. Since therefore they did not know the false ones, everyone thereafter associated indiscriminately. He therefore says, ***Do not quench the Spirit***, that is, do not suppress or hinder the gift from turning away and not permitting it to speak.

I wish you were cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold. He says, "*I wish that you were* either *hot*, aflame with the energy of the Spirit, or entirely *cold* and completely uninvolved, unbaptized, and not *lukewarm*, lacking the grace of the Spirit. For the one who possesses the spiritual fire of the Spirit in men is perfect, “who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil,” (Heb. 5:14) and they are spiritual; but the one who has not yet received the grace of the Spirit, hoping to receive it someday, is not counted among the hopeless. However, the *lukewarm* person, being uncaring both to ignorance and to the possibility of being baptized and living, is rejected.

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS 5:14
"by constant practice." He refers to habit, perfection, the well-trained, having their senses exercised, such as hearing, tongue, eyes. Indeed, he speaks of the senses of the soul. ***To distinguish***, he says, what is good, and high doctrines, and what are the spurious and corrupt. He hints at those who teach anything to everyone, giving themselves and being persuaded. For he who receives everything simply, has indiscriminately both ***good and evil***.

He says that *I am about to vomit you out of my mouth*. He indeed used the metaphor of lukewarmness appropriately; for every lukewarm thing, as the physicians[10] [ἰατρῶν παῖδες] say, when swallowed, provokes vomiting in the one who has drank it. Therefore, for those who have difficulty vomiting, they are given lukewarm water to drink, which is called by this name because it induces vomiting. He says that he intends to make you rejected from his household. But what is the cause of such a situation?

He says you hope in uncertain wealth (1 Tim. 6:17), and you have suffocated the gift of grace [χάρισμα] as if among thorns (Matt. 13:22), not listening to the one speaking: "if wealth increases, do you not set your heart on them?" (Ps. 61:11) And he says that wealth is earthly and temporary. *and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked*, lacking the spiritual and enduring things.

I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, that you may be rich. But what is this *gold refined by* the spiritual *fire*? The prophet teaches, saying "the words of the Lord are pure words, like silver refined and tested seven times on the earth" (Ps. 11:7), symbolizing the Gospel proclamation. Therefore, ask *from me* the one who can make you wise and bring you into harmony with God. For by acquiring this, one will shine forth in virtue and both soul and body will be purified. For this is the new *and white garment*.

And he says to *anoint your eyes with eye-salve so that you may see*. This is directed toward those who have dimmed vision concerning the spiritual light of the Lord, reproving them with the words of Jeremiah: "Behold, your eyes are not good, nor is your heart sound." (Jer. 22:17) Therefore, it advises that one should undergo repentance as a remedy for such hardening, just as the barren fig tree undergoes condemnation and a more dishonorable existence because of its manure. (Luke 13.6:9)

He says, *as many as I love, I rebuke and discipline*. Oh, the surpassing greatness of the love of Christ! For the reason that they are such as these, whom the word has written, it promises to love, therefore it both *rebukes and disciplines* and envies what is better in works, and to *repent* for those things in which one has sinned.

Behold, it says, *I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with me*. The Lord demonstrates to His own as the gentle and peaceful One. For the Devil strikes with "an axe and a chisel" the doors of those who do not receive him, according to the voice of the prophet (Ps. 73:6). But the Lord even now, and in the Songs, says to the bride, "Open to me, my sister, my bride." (Song 5:2) And if anyone opens to Him, He enters. The supper with the Lord, which signifies the participation in the holy mysteries, is hinted at.

To the one who overcomes, He says, *I will grant to sit with Me on My throne*, that is, he will reign with Me. For it has been said by the most wise Paul, "if we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him." (Rom. 8:17; 1 Cor. 4:8)

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON ROMANS 8:17
But our wages are the heavenly goods, and the fellowship at the secret table as sons. ***"And co-heirs with Christ."*** Again the dignity increases, and he contends to set us near the Master. So that we may not be reckoned more careless about the whole of grace, it even demands what is from us. For if, he says, we are to share in the sufferings, we shall also share in the good things. "The sufferings of the present time for the future glory." (Rom. 8:18) He indicates the temporariness of the sufferings by "*of the present time*."

just as I also conquered, He says, and I reign with *My Father*. For the Lord has also said in the Gospels: "Take heart, I have overcome the world." (Jn. 16:33)

Translator's notes for chapter 3.

1. Shepherd of Hermas, Similitude 9.16.4.

2. “pool” [κολυμβήθρας] This word has been used 3 times in the New Testament in the context of a pool (Jn. 5:2, 4, 7; 9:7). Though, the context for this comment by Oecumenius, quoting the Shepherd of Hermas is that of a pool or font for baptism.

3. The oldest Oecumenius manuscript reads “law”. Manuscripts 203 and 240 has the common and correct reading “name”. Oecumenius also has “name” in the commnents.

4. Eusebius of Caesarea, Ecclesiastical History 3.17; Chronicon Paschale 250c.

5. “united with flesh in hypostasis.” The phrase describes the hypostatic union, the Christian doctrine that Jesus Christ is one person with two natures: fully divine and fully human. This union means Jesus's divine and human natures are inseparably joined in one person without changing, confusing, or mixing with each other. The flesh is the human nature, and the hypostasis is the singular person of the Son of God.

6. 2 Corinthians 1:19 reads, “For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you through us; me, Silvanus, and Timothy; was not Yes and No, but in Him it is always Yes.”

7. “group” [ἐργαστήριον] This word literally means “workshop” or “gang”.

8. Gregory of Nazianzus, Orationes 30.2.

9. “Maker” [δημιουργός] builder, craftsman, maker. Definition: one who labors for the public, or, exercises some public calling; an architect, especially, the Divine Architect of the universe, Heb. 11:10.

10. “physicians” [ἰατρῶν παῖδες] The phrase ἰατρῶν παῖδες is Ancient Greek and literally translates to "children of physicians" or "sons of doctors". However, in classical and Hellenistic Greek literature, the phrase is a common idiom used as a periphrasis to mean "physicians" or "doctors" themselves. The phrase was also used by Oecumenius for his comments on Revelation 1:12-16.

CHAPTER 4

Revelation 4:1-3 ***And after this I saw, and behold, a door was opened in heaven; and the first voice which I heard, like a trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things." Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was set in heaven, And on the throne sat One who appeared like jasper and carnelian stone, and a rainbow encircling the throne appeared like an emerald in appearance.***[1]

It is not that there is literally a *door in heaven* that opens and closes at times, but it was shown to the evangelist in this way so that he might see the things above the heavens.

For with every *door opened*, what lies within must inevitably be seen. And *I heard a voice*, which sounded *like a trumpet*, saying these words to me: *Come up here* so that you may see what is to come.

And rising *in the Spirit*, since the ascent was neither physical nor perceptible by the senses.

I see, it says, *a throne*, and God upon it, and a spirit above Him *resembling jasper and carnelian*[2]. God is not like these things; away with that thought [ἄπαγε]. He is unlike any of the things perceived by the senses, neither having a body at all, invisible, spiritual, and without form. The invisible God is like that of the Seraphim, revealing their unseen nature, cover their faces with their wings (Is. 6:2). And to Moses, God spoke, saying: “No one shall see my face and live.” (Ex. 33:20) But even the evangelist states decisively: “No one has ever seen God.” (Jn. 1:18) Therefore, God was not seen resembling anything; rather, the vision of Him was depicted through the works of God by the Revelation.

For the *jasper* is a precious stone, this one is emerald-like and green, resembling the venom of an asp[3] [ἰῷ ἀσπίδος], from which it also derived its name. The *carnelian* is another precious *stone*, fiery and blood-red. The jasper is said to symbolize for us the nourishment of God, and provision, since all nourishment for humans, four-footed animals, birds, and crawling beasts has its origin, and as it were its cause, beginning from green grass. For the prophet says: "He causes grass to grow for the cattle, and vegetation for the service of mankind, to bring forth bread from the earth. And wine gladdens the heart of man, to make his face cheerful with oil." (Ps. 103:14-15) And again, in the creation, God says: "Let the earth bring forth grass, herb yielding seed, and fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind." (Gen. 1:11-12) Now, jasper illustrates these things. But indeed, the carnelian is described as the fearfulness of God; for our God is said by the advocator[4] [ἱεροφάντης] Moses to be "a consuming fire", (Deut. 4:24) and the prophet also cries out to Him: "You are fearful, and who can stand before Your face?" (Ps. 75:8) Accordingly, the wise Apostle writes: "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Heb. 10:31) Since the goodness of God is incompatible with those who love sin and are scornful, and is pure, not leading to repentance but to the freedom to commit wrongdoing, it is reasonable that God, along with goodness, also possesses the generous and the awe-inspiring; therefore Paul, knowing the character of those learning and the need for incentives rather than gentleness, addressed the Corinthians, saying: "What do you want? Should I come to you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of gentleness?" (1 Cor. 4:21) Yet one of the saints[5] (Basil) said, "Gehenna does not frighten you; the kingdom does not urge you on? We speak to you with a heart of stone."

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON 1 CORINTHIANS 4:21
For you, he says, are masters of these things, either being sluggish toward anger and raising me to punishment, like Ananias the stone, and Elymas to himself, or being zealous and sober, toward love. ***"In the spirit of gentleness."*** For there is also a spirit of severity and

punishment. ***"It is heard in you."*** The fault makes all things common so that they do not act carelessly as strangers to the fault.

Therefore, it was known as a fearful and astonishing necessity for those being disciplined. But the *carnelian* is not the first for God, rather, the first indeed is the *jasper.* For His nature is that of good and humane and gentle, and He wishes to be a Father rather than a Master to us. But, if it is lawful to say, we 'force' Him, and He leaves behind His natural gentleness, and is led by unnatural sternness.

And it is said that *a rainbow encircling the throne appeared like an emerald in appearance*. The perceptible *rainbow* [ἶρις] which the divine Scripture calls the bow[6] [τόξον] of God, consisting of the reflection of the solar light, when it is diverted in the thickness of a cloud, has become multicolored and numerous in color. But that one, the spiritual *rainbow*, which encompasses the divine *throne*, was of one kind; for it was *emerald in appearance*. And it itself also prefigures all the holy and ministering spirits of God, wherefore it has also been called *rainbow*, although it happens to be of one kind, so that from the various colors of the rainbow we may conceive the many orders and distinctions of the divine angels. Everything indeed is bound to one single color; for all things are equally beneficial and bear the likeness of their own Master, of the emerald color that itself attests to its productive power, just as the jasper does to God. And let no one stumble over those who encounter it; Why indeed are the sacred orders of the spiritual beings concerning God are overshadowed by the more precious stone of the *emerald*, while God Himself is associated with the less precious jasper and carnelian? For the discussion is not now about the value of what is visible, but about the meanings signified by the colors.

For if someone were to seek honor in a petty way, there would be nothing for which God could be accused, nor would anyone find

fault with it; that is, that the Lord is rejected with a stone. For Isaiah says, "Behold, I am placing a cornerstone in Zion concerning the Lord." (Isa. 28:16) And the prophet speaks of the stone that the builders rejected concerning him. The evil spirits are allegorized as mountains; for David himself said that mountains can be moved—"in the hearts of the seas," and "the mountains were shaken in his mighty power," (Ps. 117:22) whose magnitude is so great that it is impossible to find anything greater than it.

> **Revelation 4:4-6** He says that ***around the throne there are twenty-four thrones; and upon these twenty-four thrones sit elders clothed in white garments, with golden crowns upon their heads. And from the throne come flashes of lightning, voices, and thunder; and before the throne that burn seven lamps of fire, which are the seven spirits of God. Also before the throne there is a sea of glass, like crystal.***

The *twenty-four elders* seated on the *thrones* would be known only by God, the knower of hidden things; and to whom He Himself reveals it. As far as my speculation goes, they were Abel, Enoch, and Noah; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; Melchizedek and Job; Moses and Aaron; Joshua son of Nun and Samuel; David, Elijah, and Elisha; the twelve minor prophets represented as one figure; Isaiah and Jeremiah; Ezekiel and Daniel; Zechariah and John; James son of Joseph, and Stephen, the witnesses of the new covenant. It could be said that Peter, Paul, and James, the brother of John, whom Herod killed by the sword (Acts 12:2), along with the rest of the holy apostles, if they did not have a promise from the Lord, would not now, but rather in the Renewal of All Things[7] [παλιγγενεσίᾳ], sit upon twelve thrones, distinct from those already mentioned. For this is what the Lord said to them in the Gospel according to Matthew: “Truly I tell you, you who have

followed me will, at the Renewal of All Things [παλιγγενεσίᾳ], when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Matt. 19:28)

The *white garments* serve as a symbol of their purity throughout life.

The *crowns*, in turn, represent victory over passions and spiritual enemies.

The *flashes of lightning* and the sounds of *thunder* emanating from the throne once again signify the awe-inspiring presence of God. For divine beauty does not lie in some long-winded pleasure or delight, but in a wondrous and awe-inspiring reverence. And knowing this, the prophet said: "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling before Him." (Ps. 2:11)

And he speaks of *the throne that burn seven lamps of fire, which are the seven spirits of God*; indeed, the seven are the seven archangels among the angels. Clement states in the sixth Stromata[8], perhaps guided from this source to say these things, that the seven spirits are like torches of fire. For it has been said somewhere about angels: "He makes his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire." (Ps. 103:4; Heb. 1:7) This is an allegory drawn from the divine Scripture, concerning what this passage is now speaking about.

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS 1:7
"Who makes His angels spirits." For they are created beings, therefore he says, ***"Who makes."*** Behold the greatest difference: that some are created, while the One is uncreated; for the act of creating denotes the production from non-being into being. It is not only to angels that the exceptional pertains, but also to every functional power. He did not say, "Having created," but "Creating," that is, sustaining by the Word, according to which they came into being.

Also before the throne there is a sea of glass, like crystal. The vision of the *sea* represents the multitude.

But what about *glass* and *crystal*? The pure ones. And it is shown to be free from every stain by the holy fathers concerning God, who are as numerous as the sea (Isa. 10:22; Rom. 9:27). For Daniel says that "thousands upon thousands stood before Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand served Him." (Dan. 7:10) And being such in number, all are pure, resembling *glass* and *crystal*.

> **<u>Revelation 4:6-8</u>** ***And around the throne, and in the midst of the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes, in front and behind. The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature was like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. And the four living creatures, each of them having six wings around, were full of eyes within; and they had no rest day or night, saying, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."***

One cannot say that those sacred *creatures* were exactly like the ones that the prophet Ezekiel was deemed worthy to behold in his vision (Ez. 10:13). Each of them had four faces and eight wings, and they were accompanied by certain wheels called "Gelgel[9]," which were also many-eyed, much like these creatures. Here, however, each had a single face, though different from one another, and *six wings*. And those were the Cherubim, for that is how they are called in Ezekiel. These others, as I believe, are the Seraphim, shown in Isaiah the prophet (Isa. 6:2), although Isaiah neither mentioned any faces for them nor described them in detail, only that they covered their faces with their wings; not that they had many eyes, but that they had *six wings*.

But what was meaning of these great things shown to the evangelist? Was there some deception among certain Jews? That

God, who governs the holy orders in heaven and dwells within them alone, has withdrawn from and neglected those on earth because of the transgression committed in Adam. Therefore, they said to Isaiah, “Why have we fasted, and you did not notice? We humbled our souls, and you did not pay attention.” (Isa. 58:3) But such a deception came upon them from a certain written passage that says, “Lord, in heaven, your mercy and your truth reach to the clouds.” (Ps. 35:6) As it shows that divine providence proceeds by disregarding the sins committed below on earth, the vision therefore reveals to the evangelist that God's providence extends through all things, both overseeing those in Heaven and those who have come to dwell on earth.

And this is symbolized by the *four* holy *living creatures* surrounding the divine throne. For every perceptible and earthly body is composed of the four elements: fire, earth, air, and water. Each of the animals is associated with one of these elements:

the *lion* with fire, due to the animal’s warmth and spirited nature;

the *calf* with the earth, because the calf’s work is connected to the soil;

the *man* with the air, as humans are celestial and transcendent beings due to the artfulness [λεπτότητα] of the mind;

and the *eagle* with water, since birds originate from water[10].

Around the throne of God are seen those deemed worthy of care and providence, signified through living beings, that is, those on earth.

Them being *full of eyes* characteristics demonstrates God's all-encompassing watchfulness over them.

And they had no rest day or night; this does not mean that they live a life of pain and misery, unable to find relief from work and

pressing necessity, but rather that they never cease praising God, delighting continually in their melody to Him.

The term "*holy*" being repeated seven times[11] is a frequent and unceasing form of allusion. For the number seven is often handed down by divine Scripture; for example, “the barren woman bore seven children, and the many became weak through their offspring,” (1 Sam.2:5) and “the seven eyes of the Lord watch over the entire earth,” (Zech. 4:10) and “the righteous man is delivered seven times from distress.” (Prov. 24:16)

He says, "*who was, and is, and is to come*." Through these, the Holy and venerable Trinity is revealed, as was stated earlier. There is nothing wrong with saying now, “for writing the same things is not burdensome to me,” (Phil. 3:1) and the divine apostle has clearly demonstrated this to those who encounter it as certain.

The Father, who *is*, is named by Moses. For he says to him, "I AM THE ONE WHO IS [ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὤν]." (Ex. 3:14) And concerning the Son, it is said to the evangelist, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (Jn. 1:1) And he says that the Holy Spirit is the one *who is to come*, for He always visits the souls worthy of receiving Him.

Revelation 4:9-11 ***And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to the One seated on the throne, to the One who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders will fall down before the One seated on the throne and worship the One who lives forever and ever. They will cast their crowns before the throne, saying: “Worthy are you, Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.”***

Along with the holy *living creatures*, the *elders* give glory to God; the act of *casting their crowns before God* signifies that the *crown* is a symbol of victory and kingship. *Casting them before the throne* of God, the true and genuine kingdom and the victory over all given to God who reigns over all, they say: "To You, Master, all glory is owed; for You brought all things from non-existence into being, and by Your will subjected what did not exist before."

Translator's notes for chapter 4.

1. The oldest Oecumenius manuscript omits parts of this verse, "jasper and carnelian stone, and a rainbow encircling the throne." Manuscripts 203 and 240 have it. He also has the entire passage in the comments below.

2. As seen here, Oecumenius has what the oldest Oecumenius manuscript omitted.

3. "venom of an asp" [ἰῷ ἀσπίδος] This doesn't make a lot of sense, considering that asp venom is usually white or yellowish, and it is strange that Oecumenius would use that as an example of the color jasper. Psalm 140:3 uses this in the plural form [ἰὸς ἀσπίδων], and it is undoubtedly in the context of asp venom. William Weinrich translated it as "the rust of a shield." He also adds a footnote implying that perhaps Oecumenius is drawing from Epiphanius of Salamis On the Twelve Gems 6 (PG 43:334-35). The quote is, "*Its appearance is green in color, like the emerald but to a slight extent like that of the bnobi and from within it emits a green color like that of copper rust*."

4. "advocator" [ἱεροφάντης] Literally a teacher of religious rites and ceremonies, a high-priest, hierophant.

5. The text did not have "(Basil)", I added it in. This reference by Oecumenius is from Basil of Caesarea, Sermon to the Rich 6.

6. "bow" [τόξον] Toxon is an ancient Greek word for a bow. It is also the root of words like "toxic" and "toxin," which are derived from a related Greek word for a poison-tipped arrow.

7. In Matthew 19:28, Jesus uses παλιγγενεσίᾳ to describe a future, global event: The Event: Jesus promises his disciples that "in the Renewal of

All Things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne," they will also sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. The Meaning: This refers to the eschatological (end-times) restoration of creation to its perfect, pristine state, removing the effects of decay and the fall. It encapsulates the prophetic hopes of a new heaven and a new earth (Isaiah 65:17, Revelation 21:1).

8. Clement of Alexandria, Stromata 6.16.149.1.

9. "Gelgel" is a Hebrew term that refers to the whirling wheels in Ezekiel's vision (Ezekiel 10:13). It describes the ophanim (wheels) seen beneath the divine chariot of God, moving in unison with the living creatures, representing divine movement, omniscience, and omnipresence.

10. While birds ultimately originated from land-dwelling, four-limbed vertebrates, some of the earliest ancestors of modern birds may have lived in and adapted to aquatic environments before moving back onto land. Fossils of the Early Cretaceous bird *Gansus yumenensis*, discovered in ancient lakebeds, show it had a near-modern build and was highly adapted for living on water, similar to modern ducks or loons. This suggests that some early bird ancestors used aquatic environments for their evolution before transitioning to life on land.

11. “The term ‘holy’ being repeated seven times” is based upon the best manuscripts. The 15th century Salonika manuscript (203) reads, “The term ‘holy’ being repeated many times.”

CHAPTER 5

Revelation 5:1-7 ***And I saw a scroll written inside and outside, sealed with seven seals, in the right hand of the One seated on the throne. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll[1] and break its seals? But no one in Heaven, on earth, or under the earth was able to open the scroll or even look inside it. And I wept much because no one was found worthy to open the little scroll or to look into it. Then one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep! Behold,***

the Lion from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed to open the seven seals of the scroll." And I saw in the midst of the throne, the four living creatures, and the elders, a Lamb standing as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. And He came and took the scroll from the right hand of the One seated on the throne.

The divine Scripture of God explains in detail to us about a certain *scroll* [βίβλον] in which all people happen to be *written*, perhaps metaphorically calling the record of our memory before God a "*scroll*", except that the prophet calls it a small scroll[2] [βιβλίον] saying, "Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; and upon your small scroll all will be written." (Ps. 138:16) Moses, the wisest of all, seeking to atone for Israel's sins, wept and cried out to God, saying: "If you forgive their sin, forgive them; but if not, then erase me from the scroll you have written." (Ex. 32:32)

This divine evangelist sees this scroll *written inside and outside.* And *inside* would be those from Israel, written as worshippers of God[3] [θεοσεβεῖς] according to the instruction of the law; outside, and in a worse fate, those from the nations[4] [ἐθνῶν] as idolaters before believing in Christ.

The *little scroll* was *in the right hand of* God; the paths of the saints, as I suppose, are those who succeeded in the ancient times. The *little scroll* was both *sealed* and secured *with seven seals*. The seventh, being a perfect number, signifies that *the little scroll* was *sealed* and marked very securely. What, then, does it mean that the little scroll is *sealed*? It means that *no one was found worthy to look* at it except for a few. For how could what is *sealed* be revealed, given the transgression in Adam? Rather, the majority, immersed in sin, have prepared the little scroll to be sealed. For there were those (the majority, immersed in sin) who were

innumerable, just like the few who were pleasing to God, who were allowed to speak freely; this freedom and the boldness before God inscribed within them all alike was sealed, since “everyone turned away and became corrupt”, according to the prophet (Ps. 13:3): for even though a few succeeded and were counted among the righteous in the past, they were merely human and did not become worthy to reclaim for all people the boldness lost through sin. Knowing this, the prophet cried out to God: “In the morning, when You hear the voice of my prayer, in the morning I will stand before You and You will look upon me.” (Ps. 5:4) “In the morning”, calling to mind the appearance of Christ, “the Sun of Righteousness,” (Mal. 4:2) having dispersed the darkness of ignorance. In this, humanity will gain boldness; and not otherwise. So that those who pray may be heard, and may be deemed worthy of this vision, with Christ having removed the sin that separates us from God. Before his visitation to humanity, “every mouth was closed, and the entire world was held accountable to God” according to what is written (Rom. 3:19). Therefore, the deep things recorded in the scroll, as has been said, indicate that the scroll was sealed and closed.

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON ROMANS 3:19
So that the Jews may not say, "Why do these things against us?" For it was not said absolutely concerning us. "Yes," he says, "concerning you." For we all know this, that whatever the law declares (and by "law" he means the whole Old Testament), it speaks to those under the law. For what need was there, he says, for David to accuse others and not his own, and to rebuke others, Isaiah having been sent to correct the Jews? ***"He speaks to those under the law."*** With great exactness he even set this. For he did not say, concerning those under law, but, "to those under the law." For he speaks much also concerning Babylonians, and Persians and Medes and Egyptians, and many other nations. Yet nevertheless he brought the Jews and these predictions concerning them to those under the law, that is, to those subject to the law. ***"That every mouth may be stopped."*** He shows the Jews to be boastful. Therefore the prophets rebuked them, so that the mouths of the boastful might be stopped. ***"And that the whole world may be held accountable to God."*** He intimates something like this: therefore, he says, the prophets refuted and showed the Jews as boasting without cause, and rather declared the whole world guilty of

sins, so that they might progress toward faith, and human beings, knowing that neither by law and circumcision nor by uncircumcision is anyone saved, might readily approach Christ, who saves mankind by grace. And "held accountable"—liable to believe in Christ, in God. For if it has been said to those under the law by the prophets themselves that they do not walk uprightly but go far from the right way of life, and the Gentiles are much more in perdition and error, clearly the whole world is obliged to believe in Christ, in God alone who is able to save, both Jews and Greeks and the whole world through his own grace from their sins and from their long error and perdition.

He says, *I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals? No one*, he says, *is worthy*, O most divine angel, to speak to it, except the God who became man, who took away sin, "having wiped out the handwriting that was against us," (Col. 2:14) and by his own obedience healed our disobedience (Rom. 5:19).

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON COLOSSIANS 2:14

"Having wiped out the handwriting that was against us." To say "having wiped out" is to mean almost completely blotted out. He says ***"handwriting"*** either meaning that personal, handwritten or vocal confession which they made to Moses, that "All the things which the Lord has spoken we will do and we will hear," (Ex. 24:3) or the obedience owed to God, or that command which God laid on Adam, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat; for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." (Gen. 2:17)

He said, *But no one in Heaven, on earth, or under the earth was able to open the little scroll*. For neither an angel accomplished these things for us, as Isaiah says; "neither an elder nor an angel, but he himself saved them because he loved them," (Isa. 63:9) neither a living man, nor any of the dead. "A brother is not redeemed, a man shall not redeem himself," as it is written somewhere (Ps. 48:8). And what do I mean by saying to open the little scroll, when no one among men was able to look at it? For how could anyone filled with the mist of sin gaze upon the divine throne before which the little scroll was placed? And the unworthiness of all became the cause of my lamentations.

Then one of the elders said to me, "*Do not weep! Behold, the Lion from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed to open the seven seals of the little scroll*." He said, He who has overcome our conqueror (the Devil), this one who opened the little scroll and the seals.

Who is *the lion of the tribe of Judah*, but certainly Christ, concerning whom the patriarch Jacob said: "He crouched like a lion and like a young lion; who will rouse him?" (Gen. 49:9) And that the Lord arose according to the flesh from Judah, the divine apostle testified, saying it is evident that our Lord Jesus Christ arose from Judah (Heb. 7:14); and one might marvel why he did not say "a rod from the root of Jesse," nor "a flower from the root," as Isaiah said (Isa. 11:1), but rather "*the Root of David*." He says this, showing that according to the human aspect, the rod was from the root of Jesse and David sprouting forth; but according to the divine aspect, the root itself is not only David, but of all visible and invisible creation, being the cause of all things, as has been stated before.

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS 7:14
For it is said, ***"that our Lord arose from Judah."*** The word "arose" is related to the fleshly birth of our Savior God. A crafted expression referring to the fleshly birth of our Savior, the word "arose," taken from the prophecy of Balaam, "A star shall rise out of Jacob," (Num. 24:17) saying; and also from Malachi (4:2), calling him the sun of righteousness. Through these, it is shown that the coming of the Lord was for the enlightenment of the world.

He says, *And I saw, in the midst of the throne* and around the throne, *a Lamb standing as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. And He came and took,* that is the little scroll*, from the right hand of the One seated on the throne*. The Lord is called the *Lamb* because of His innocence and His role as the provider. Just as the lamb is a provider during the annual wool-shearing, so too the Lord "opens His hand and fills every living

creature with good will." (Ps. 144:16) Thus, prophecy itself also calls him in this way, through Isaiah saying that "he was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb before the shearer, silent," (Isa. 53:7) and through Jeremiah, saying, "I, he says, knew not that I was leading a harmless lamb to be sacrificed." (Jer. 11:19)

The lamb was not actually slain, but appeared *as though it had been slain*. For Christ overcame death by enduring it, and looted Hades of the souls held captive by it; thus, the death of Christ is not truly a permanent death, but a death brief in duration due to the resurrection. Since the Lord, after the resurrection, also bore the symbols of death, the marks of the nails (Jn. 20:25), the body made life-giving by His blood, as Isaiah says, speaking from the presence of the holy angels, "Why are your garments red, and your clothes like those of one treading in a winepress, full of the crushed grape?" (Isa. 63:2-3) Therefore, it appeared *as though it had been slain* in the vision of the apparition.

The *seven horns* testify to his great power, since the number seven, being perfect, signifies completeness, as has been said before; and the *horns* are a symbol of strength according to the prophet who says: "I will crush all the horns of the wicked, but the horn of the righteous shall be exalted," (Ps. 74:11) and the prophet Habakkuk "holds the horn in his hand." (Hab. 3:4)

The *seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth*, are interpreted for us by Isaiah, who says that "a spirit of wisdom and understanding, a spirit of counsel and might, a spirit of knowledge and godliness, and a spirit filled with the fear of God shall rest upon him." (Isa. 11:2-3)

The *spirits*, that is, the spiritual gifts, were indeed sent to every person from God, yet no one accepted them as having labored briefly in their journey toward all, to find rest in Christ. And what happened was superior in both word and understanding. For the *spirits* that he himself sent down from above as God, he himself

received them below as a man, since it was both this and that. To him belongs the glory forever and ever, Amen.

[Fourth Discourse]

Therefore, when all those in heaven and on earth, and under the earth, wondered to open the little scroll or to look into it as it had been seen before, only Christ, the Son of God, who for us and through us became and remains what He was, took the little scroll.

> **Revelation 5:8-12** ***And when He took the little scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints; and they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the little scroll and to open its seals, for You were slain and by Your blood You purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation, and You have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth." Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing."***

Having received *the little scroll from* the Lord, all worshiped it, fully aware of the salvation it is destined to bring to humanity, and the punishment it holds for the impure demons. The *elders holding harps* signify the harmonious and melodious nature of their confession to God, according to the written word: "Sing to our God, sing." (Ps. 46:7)

The *incense* symbolizes the offering from all the nations. For Malachi says, in the person of God, to the disobedient Israel: "I do not accept a sacrifice from your hands, because from the rising of the sun to its setting, my name has been glorified among the nations, and in every place incense is offered in my name, and a pure sacrifice." (Mal. 1:10-11) Proclaiming beforehand through these the faith and gift-bearing of the nations.

and they sang a new song. For the song sung to God incarnate is new, having never before been brought forth prior to the incarnation. What was the song? *Worthy are You*, it says, "to bring this salvation to mankind, *you* who *were slain* for us *and by your blood* have redeemed many from under the heavens."

And he certainly spoke very securely *from every tribe and language and people and nation*. For he did not acquire all, for many died in unbelief, but from all those worthy of salvation. The prophet also said: “Arise, O God, judge the earth, for you shall judge all the nations; indeed, you will not condemn all the nations.” (Ps. 81:8)

And He *made them kings and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth*. Therefore, you are able also to understand the Scripture, for you are faithful servants of Christ, both *kings* and leaders of the churches; you are able to govern the passions rather than be governed by them; and as *priests*, you bring your own bodies “as a living, holy, and acceptable sacrifice to God,” according to what is written. (Rom. 12:1)

And not only do the *elders* say this, but also the *angels* and incorporeal powers sang a victory hymn to Christ. Moreover, the number now mentioned by them was also foretold by Daniel (Dan. 7:10); the song of the *angels* attributes seven different honors to Christ, indicating through the seven that Christ ought to be crowned with countless praises.

<u>Revelation 5:13-14</u> ***And every creature in heaven and on earth and under the sea, and all that is in them, heard saying to Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb: "Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him forever and ever." And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the elders fell down and worshiped.***

The present text expresses the doxology universally accorded by all creation, both heavenly and earthly, to God the Father, and to the Word who became man and was made flesh[5], that is, also glorified together with the Holy Spirit.

Translator's notes for chapter 5.

1. In some manuscripts of the commentary by Oecumenius, there is a gap (lacuna) in the Scripture text. The missing section reads, "and break its seals?" But no one in Heaven, on earth, or under the earth was able to open the scroll". Though there is a gap in the Scripture text of the commentary, Oecumenius does comment on the missing text in his comments below the Scripture text. In other words, the original Scripture text that Oecumenius has does not omit that section

2. In Ancient Greek, βίβλος was the primary word for "papyrus" or "scroll," while βιβλίον was originally a diminutive meaning "little scroll" or "small book". Over time, however, the diminutive sense was lost, and βιβλίον became the common word for "book" or "document".

3. "worshippers of God" [θεοσεβεῖς] Θεοσεβεῖς means "godly," "pious," or "worshippers of God," a plural form of the Greek adjective θεοσεβής, combining theos (God) and sebō (to worship/revere), describing people showing deep reverence, piety, and right action toward God. And historically called "God-fearers," who were Gentiles attracted to Judaism but not fully converted, often observing Jewish practices like Sabbath and prayer.

4. The Greek word ἐθνῶν is the genitive plural of ἔθνος, meaning "of nations," "of peoples," or "of Gentiles". Its specific meaning depends on

context, but it can refer to groups of people as nations or tribes, and in a biblical context, it often means non-Jewish people (Gentiles).

5. "the Word who became man [ἐνανθρωπήσαντι] and was made flesh [σαρκωθέντα]." The Greek word ἐνανθρωπήσαντι is a theological term meaning "having become man" or "incarnate". The word "σαρκωθέντα" means "incarnate" or "became flesh." It derives from the verb σαρκόω, which means to give flesh or to incarnate.

CHAPTER 6

Revelation 6:1-4 And when He said, ***I saw that the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come." And I looked, and behold, a white horse, and the one sitting on it had a bow, and a crown was given to him, and He came forth so that the one who conquers may be victorious. And when He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come." And another horse came out, fiery red, and to the one sitting on it was given the power to take peace from the earth so that people would kill one another, and a great sword was given to him.***

The closing and sealing of the little scroll, which contains the names of the people written in it, signifies that it is unalterable, and that their mouths are shut from any justification before God, according to what has been previously stated (Rev. 5:1). Therefore, the gradual removal of the seals signifies the gradual repetition of the boldness and intimacy toward God, which the only begotten One, having become incarnate, has made possible for us by correcting our shortcomings through His own deeds. It must be understood that the breaking of each *seal* signifies one of the acts performed by the Lord for our salvation, and also those

carried out by Him against the spiritual enemies of our souls. For the Lord's providence toward us involves the overthrow of those powers.

Let no one be amazed at those things that will happen, that the Only Begotten existed before becoming incarnate; for the works and deeds before His coming to us are shown to the divine evangelist through vision. Yet, He appears as a *Lamb* in the revelation, as if slain.

For it is customary that what is seen by the prophets serves as a pre-announcement of things to come. Therefore, a man long ago contended with Jacob (Gen. 32:24), a type of Christ; thus, Isaiah[1] saw the prophetess conceiving in her womb and bearing a son, whose name is also called, "Despoil Quickly, Plunder Rapidly." (Isa. 8:3) Thus Daniel saw the Son of Man, still without flesh, God, the Word coming to the Ancient of Days. (Dan. 7:13)

Therefore, the first blessing, which pertains to our race through our Savior Christ, is the one that *opened* the first *seal* of the little scroll and established the beginning of leading us back to where we came from, out of the transgression in Adam, and to recover for us the lost relationship with God and to transfer our previously forbidden access into boldness. This is the bodily birth established by the Lord, which sanctified our birth so that we are no longer conceived in lawlessness and carried in sins by our mothers, but we have a holy birth of Christ through our own birth, by which the human birth is blessed. And a witness to such a noble ambition toward humanity is the divine apostle, who writes: "since your children are unclean, but now they are holy." (1 Cor. 7:14)

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON 1 CORINTHIANS 7:14
For if the unfaithful part is not overcome by the purity of the faithful, he says, nothing prevents the born ones from being defiled, or half-pure. Which, he says, is not so (for it is holy), casting out awe from the possession of the holy word. For this is what you say: ***"Since then your children are unclean,"*** if it is not so. But now they are holy by the possession of holiness.

When the first seal was *opened*, he said he saw *a white horse* coming forth from those spiritual holy beings, holding *a bow*; *and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering so that he might conquer*. A *white horse* serves as a symbol of the Gospel, representing the good will to be bestowed upon humanity. The *crown*, on the other hand, signifies power and victory. It came forth bearing the crown with Christ, as the one who began to conquer the Devil who had enslaved our race. It is said that *He came forth so that the one who conquers may be victorious*. Christ was the one who *conquers*, so that he may conquer completely, and the symbol of victory he bore was the crown. This is the first *seal*.

But secondly, there is the blessing of Christ to us, who *opened the second seal* of the little scroll, and added to us the release of our shame, restoring to us the divine vision; He was tempted as the Lord and overcame the tempter so that He might show not only victory but also that the adversary was defeated. The adversary did not bite the heel of the rider[2] nor trip up our steps (Ps. 140:4) according to God's commandments, but rather, falling backward and being sent away in servitude, and hearing from the Man whom he wrestled with long ago, even though God was in Him, He said, "Depart, Satan," (Matt. 4:10) and Satan went away in shame. And now, for the first time, the adversary knowing his own weakness, he who boasts of sitting above the clouds on his throne, will be made like the Most High, imagining himself according to what was described by Isaiah. (Isa. 14:13-14)

When it happened, a *fiery red horse came out*, led by one of the holy *creatures*; *and to the one sitting on* the horse *it was given the power to take peace from the earth so that people would kill one another, and a great sword was given to him*. The *fiery red horse* is a riddle[3] [αἴνιγμα] of blood; therefore, a *sword* is given to the

one seated upon it, by which to destroy and divide the unity of those on *earth* toward evil. They were united in their idolatry and so that they might *kill one another*; that is, to destroy each other through hostile contracts. For the Lord "did not come to bring peace upon the earth, but a sword; and to set a son against his father, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law," (Matt. 10:34-35) the new and godly against the ancient and condemned.

> **Revelation 6:5-8** ***And when he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come." And I looked, and behold, a black horse; and the one sitting on it had a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine." And when he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come." I looked, and behold, a pale horse; and the one sitting on it was named Death, and Hades followed with him. And they were given authority over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with death and by the beasts of the earth.***

Thirdly, the mercy of Christ has *opened the third seal* for us, and has brought us, from having been condemned to rejection, to God and the Father. And this is his saving teaching, and the benefits through the divine signs; for these brought about the overthrow of the Devil; for through them we have come to know who is by nature and truly God, "so that we may not be infants, tossed about by every wind of doctrine" (Eph. 4:14); and we honor those things which our hands have made, exchanging the corruptible demons for the glory of God. For the divine teaching of the Lord drew to itself, like yeast to flour, those who were learning, according to

the voice of the Lord, and enjoying the miracles, which healed souls more than bodies.

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON EPHESIANS 4:14
"That we should no longer be infants." He shows that they had suffered this long ago, and as if arranging it in the order of a narrative he corrects them, composing himself because it is not burdensome. "Infants," he says, "in faith. And being carried about." For truly to be infants is to be carried about, and not having gone on and become established. ***"By every wind."*** Having said being tossed about, he continued with the turn, and by way of teaching called it the wind of doctrine. ***"by the sleight of men."*** Sleight of words are called those who sometimes teach this, sometimes that, and continually shift from one thing to another deceitfully. Such are the heretics. And such, he says, are also crafty in finding a method and a pretext for error, contriving everything to deceive.

When these things happened, *a black horse* came forth, *and the one sitting on it had a pair of scales in his hand*. The *black horse* symbolizes sadness and mourning, imposed by the divine teachings following the downfall of the Devil, and therefore, in Devil's mourning, it finds its own release[4] [λῦσιν], corresponding to such extensive periods of time.

The *scales* are indeed a symbol of equality and justice. For "the one who judges righteousness sat upon the throne; he rebuked the nations of the demons, and the impious one," (Ps. 9:5-6) their leader, perished. Therefore, the scales is a symbol of the righteous judgment of the Lord, the scales that is upon us; it also signifies that we may speak boldly before Him: "You have established my judgment and my justice," (Ps. 9:5) so that the nations may know that we are men, and not subjected to the judgment of beasts, dragged by a "bridle and a strap," (Ps. 31:9) and pastured by destructive tyrants.

And he said, *I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the*

wine." The word and the teaching, as a seed, is metaphorically expressed in the divine Scripture; for it is written according to Matthew: "The sower went out to sow" (Matt. 13:3); and again, the most favored of the servants said to their lord, "Lord, did you not sow good seed in the field? Where then do the weeds come from?" (Matt. 13:27) As for the seed, it is indeed grain, like the evangelical preaching which serves as proper nourishment for mature men, "who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil." (Heb. 5:14)

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS 5:14
"by constant practice." He refers to habit, perfection, the well trained, having their senses exercised, such as hearing, tongue, eyes. Indeed, he speaks of the senses of the soul. ***To distinguish***, he says, ***what is good,*** and high doctrines, and what are the spurious and corrupt. He hints at those who teach anything to everyone, giving themselves and being persuaded. For he who receives everything simply, has indiscriminately both good and evil.

What then is *barley*? According to the Law of Moses, it is the teaching, as the earliest form of grain, fully matured, and serving as nourishment appropriate for livestock, feeding the infant Israel.

Therefore, God speaks from among the four living creatures saying: "*A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius*." Through this, a famine is foretold, along with a scarcity among the people of that time of both teaching and the Gospel from the Lord, as well as of the law, according to what is written: "I will give them neither hunger for bread nor thirst for water, but hunger for hearing the word of the Lord." (Amos 8:11)

Even if he says that those who despise every teaching and turning should suffer these and those things most of all, *do not harm the oil and the wine*; leave them alone and do not bring any punishment upon them; God says there is still mercy for them from me. Since there is hope for them, to be spiritually joyful in

the divine proclamations of my Only Begotten; for this is "the wine that spiritually gladdens the heart of man." (Ps. 104:15)

Therefore, by continuing in their previous disobedience, he would wrong the mercy granted to them by God, as well as the joy that would be perceived[5] [νοητὴν] through faith. And why do I say "perceived" only? For the teachings of the Lord possessed grace that was both perceptible and visible; and the prophet bears witness, saying, "Grace has been poured out upon your lips," (Ps. 44:32) addressing the Lord. Moreover, Josephus, the Jewish man, compelled by truth, writes concerning Him in his book Antiquities of the Jews[6] the following: "At this time there appeared Jesus, a wise man, if it is proper to call him a man; for he was a doer of extraordinary works, a teacher of people who accept the truth with pleasure; and he attracted many Jews and many from the Greek population.

This was the Christ. And He was shown to us as one of the first men, having been crucified by Pilate; those who first loved Him did not cease. For He appeared to them alive again on the third day, fulfilling what the divine prophets had spoken, these and countless other miracles concerning Him. Even now, the community[7] [φῦλον] of those called Christians has not perished from this time onward."

It is the breaking of *the fourth seal* and the beginning of the release from the sin of Adam's transgression. For this release is the indicator of reconciliation with God. For if "our sins separate us from God", as Isaiah says (Isa. 59:2), then their removal brings us back into fellowship. But what is the remedy? The wounds of Christ, through which we have been freed (see 1 Peter 2:24; Isa. 53:5). For since we were condemned by the pleasure of tasting, we have been healed by its opposites. Opposite to pleasure are the wounds, which bear the painful sensation, all of which Christ endured on our behalf, through which we were led to the

corruption of death, but He endured it through opposites: through obedience, disobedience (see Rom. 5:19); through painful submission, pleasure; through the brave placing of His hands upon the cross, which had rashly touched the forbidden tree.

Of which it is said to have occurred, by the command *of the fourth living creature saying, "Come." I looked, and behold, a pale horse; and the one sitting on it was named Death, and Hades followed with him. And they were given authority over a fourth of the earth*. The *pale horse* is a symbol of wrath; for the bile is pale green, and so it is called by physicians.

Death and Hades were indeed sent forth spiritually to overthrow the deceitful demons and to exact justice for the destruction of humanity. However, since the saving work of Christ's passion had not yet been accomplished through the Revelation, by which He atoned all the sins committed against us, the complete destruction of the demons had not yet occurred; rather, only a quarter part had been destroyed.

This destruction is metaphorically called a slaughter and *famine* by those who long ago worshipped them; and *death*, the end of their tyranny, is brought about through death itself, and their annihilation *by the beasts of the earth*;

beasts of the earth being the passions of pride and vanity in the demons. Though these demons are earthly by nature, as they delight in the earthly passions that afflict those on earth, even though they have a spiritual nature, they are weakened and consumed as they are cast out from their dominion over humanity.

Revelation 6:9-11 ***And when he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and because of the testimony***[8] ***they had maintained. And they cried out with a loud voice,***

saying: "How long, O Master, holy and true, will You not judge and avenge our blood from those who dwell on the earth?" And to each of them was given a white robe, and it was said to them that they should rest a little longer, until their fellow servants and their brothers, who were to be killed as they were, should be completed.

Therefore, the *fifth* salvation of the Lord was granted to humanity, which *opened the fifth seal* of the Lord and brought us liberation from sins and reconciliation with God. The bonds and wounds, by which the Lord was bound and brought before Pilate, and which He suffered from Pilate who had a half-hearted reverence (see Matt. 27), were therefore overcome. Regarding these matters, Isaiah[9] spoke of the plagues, saying that when the Lord was asked by the divine angels, "What are these wounds in the midst of your hands?" He replied, "Those with which I was wounded in the house of my beloved." (Zech. 13:6) For these wounds healed our wounds, which we received when we were going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, who bound us and wounded us, leaving us half dead, according to the parable of Luke. (Luke 10:30) But He has also loosened our bonds, the cords of sin by which we were bound; for the prophet says that “the cords of sinners were entangled around me.” (Ps. 118:61) Therefore, the Devil, acting wickedly on his own accord, was unaware, and in the Lord’s rebukes, he thrust the sword against himself and fell from his poorly established authority[10].

When this happened, since previously the saints who had testified in the old days had not yet experienced such things against Christ; although He was spat upon, struck, and slapped, these acts were done in secret, in the unlawful council of the high priests, with only the servants and those summoned to the council as witnesses, and they still remained silent, remembering no one but themselves; but when they saw the Lord bound, scourged publicly by Pilate, and before all the Jewish people, they then rose up

together, and having become witnesses against their master, they also remembered themselves.

For he said, *I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and because of the testimony they had maintained*. He said, *I saw the souls* of the martyrs who held the highest place; for they were above the heavenly altar. Then he also says by which martyrs, having been slain, he speaks on behalf of the devotion of the ancient word and of the church, or rather the synagogue, which they had. For not only do the martyrs die for themselves, but they make the benefit common; for their courage becomes an encouragement to the rest, and the knowledge of God was built up by the blood of the saints.

And they cried out with a loud voice, saying: "How long, O Master, holy and true, will You not judge and avenge our blood from those who dwell on the earth?" They directed their prayer not against men, but against the demons who dwell among earthly passions; for it was not characteristic of the love of the saints to rise up against their fellow kindred, but against those who lead men into destruction against them.

Having said these things, they first put on *white robes*. This was a symbol[3] [αἴνιγμα] of being purified by their own blood and of laying aside all impurity.

Then they hear: "*rest a little longer, until their fellow servants and their brothers, who were to be killed as they were, should be completed*." For it was not just that those who were equal in courage should be hindered from receiving the crowns of martyrdom, which had been taken away prematurely from those whom demons tormented.

<u>Revelation 6:12-17</u> ***And I saw when he opened the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun***

became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became blood, and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, like a fig tree casting its unripe figs when shaken by a strong wind; and the sky departed like a scroll being rolled up; and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. And the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the powerful and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"

The breaking of *the sixth seal* accomplished the perfect completion of our salvation; it destroyed death; it restored life; it crowned the conqueror of mankind, triumphing with confidence according to what is written: “For the only-begotten ascended on high; he led captivity captive; he received gifts among men.” (Ps. 68:18: Eph. 4:8)

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON EPHESIANS 4:8
For the other things are common, but the gifts are given according to the proportion of each one's purity. Therefore he says, "***Having ascended on high."*** And that, he says, the grace is a gift of Christ, and he himself measured and gave, hear, he says, to David. But the "Having ascended on high" he says elsewhere, namely, "Your majesty has been exalted above the heavens." (Ps. 57:11) Whom did he capture? Clearly us, the good and beneficial captivity. Having overcome the Devil in a spiritual war, he took us captive, not in order that he might enslave us (how could he subdue those who were already slaves?), but that he might free us from the bitter tyranny of the evil one. Some understood this of the cross. Having ascended on the cross, he took captives.

What then is the sixth seal’s opening? It is the cross of the Lord and His death, followed by the prayer of every intellectual and sensible creature, the resurrection and ascension, “which He

inaugurated for us a new and living way," the return from death to life through the tearing of "the veil of His flesh" (Heb. 10:20); which benefited not only the living but also those who had gone before.

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS 10:20
"which He inaugurated for us." It was the entrance of the holy places, and a path leading to it, recently cut. For this, it is said, was inaugurated. ***"new."*** Which in our times, he says, took its beginning. And this is our claim, that in the times around Abraham, this road did not exist, but was established among us. ***"and living."*** For the first way led to death and to disbelief; this one, however, truly brings to life, since it itself lives and endures. ***"through the veil."*** For all these good things have come to us through the flesh of Christ and His sacrifice. This also recently prepared the way to heaven, having walked it first. And rightly is the flesh of Christ called the veil. For when He was lifted up, that is, on the cross, then the things in heaven were revealed, which belong to the veil, and that it concealed the Divinity within itself. And this is also the characteristic of a veil.

For the Lord also went and preached to those in Hades who had once disobeyed, according to the divine apostle Peter, (1 Peter 3:19-20) and saved those who believed there, as is also thought by Cyril[11].

Of which things having happened, *a great earthquake occurred*, he says, *and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became blood, and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, like a fig tree casting its unripe figs when shaken by a strong wind*. The vision clearly depicts for us the signs that occurred on the cross: the earthquake and the shaking of the earth (Matt. 27:51), the darkening of the sun, and the entire transformation of the moon into blood.

Indeed, the *whole* [ὅλη] was added very precisely to the *moon*; for being nearly full and not divided, it showed the entire suffering on the day of the crucifixion through its entirety. It is customary for the enlightened part for such things to occur during lunar eclipses. And these things the prophet Joel also foretold would happen,

saying, "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and glorious day of the Lord comes." (Joel 2:31)

The *stars of the sky fell to the earth*, it is said, happened either by chance and was perceptible; if not, the account suggests that the heavenly light ceased, and everything was darkened (Luke 23:44-45, Matt. 27:45, Mark 15:33).

The sky is described as *departed like a scroll being rolled up*. Through the *sky*, the heavenly powers of the angels are mentioned, who themselves were disturbed, unable to bear the insult to their master, both here and there. The sky is said to be torn apart *like a scroll* being unrolled and *shaken*.

It is also said that *every mountain and island moved from their places*. *Mountains* and *islands* are called the ranks[12] [τάγματα] of the high-minded spirits, according to what is written about them; “and mountains can be moved within the hearts of the seas.” (Ps. 45:3) He also says that *islands* themselves rise up and are lifted by the vain vanity of their intellect in the unstable and salty distractions of this life. (see Isa. 23:2-6.)

And, he says, *the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the powerful and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?*" *Kings* again *and great men*, *commander*s and the *rich* and *powerful*, he calls wretched demons, as those who began to oppress the earth through violence and deceit; but *slaves* and *free men*, those who excel among the demons and are subject to them.

As for *hiding themselves in caves and in the rocks of the mountains*, and yet saying, "*You will fall upon us and hide us*," this is spoken figuratively; it hints at fugitives attempting to escape the punishment imposed on them by Christ. For if an invisible punishment and retribution were not inflicted upon them, what is the meaning of what was said by the prophet Isaiah concerning Christ's presence: "I have trodden the winepress alone, and among the nations there is no man with me; I have trampled them in my anger, and crushed them in my wrath, and their blood I have poured out upon the earth"? (Isa. 63:2-3) And what is the meaning of calling the God-hated [θεοστυγεῖς] demons by Matthew: "What have we to do with you, Son of God? Have you come to torment us?" (Matt. 8:29) But one might understand that these things spoken in the Revelation are not only the sufferings of demons, but also of the lawless Jews who crucified the Lord on the cross, who, being oppressed by the war against the Romans, became fugitives in the mountains and caves and the clefts of the earth, and were everywhere tormented by distress and anguish.

Translator's notes for chapter 6.

1. Cyril of Alexandria quoted this passage by Isaiah and is in line with Oecumenius, saying, "For God commanded the prophet both to take the scroll and to write with a pen concerning what is appointed for us in it;; He also came to the prophetess to write with a pen concerning what is appointed for us in it;. And what is the meaning of "He came"? It was formed instead of the law of the assembly. The prophetess is called holy and virgin, for she prophesied while bearing Christ. Then he says: "And in the womb she received and bore a son," to whom even the law assigns, not as a mere man again, but as God according to His deeds. "For you shall call His name, "Despoil Quickly, Plunder Rapidly," he says. (Isa.8:3) For the divine and supreme infant, having been born immediately, was indeed in swaddling clothes and still in the mother's womb because of His humanity; but since He was also by nature God, an indescribable power immediately anticipated the devices of Satan. For the magi came from

the East, seeking Him and saying: “Where is He who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.” (Matt.2:2)

2. The phrase "bite the heel of the rider" is primarily a biblical metaphor from Genesis 3:15 and 49:17.

3. “riddle” αἴνιγμα is an Ancient Greek word meaning a riddle, puzzle, or obscure saying, something difficult to understand or mysterious, leading to the English word "enigma". It refers to an unclear statement, hint, or dark saying, like looking through a clouded mirror, often used in a spiritual or philosophical sense to describe limited, partial understanding.

4. “release” [λῦσιν] Λῦσιν is an Ancient Greek word meaning release, deliverance, or freedom. It is an inflected form (accusative singular) of the noun λύσις. In specific contexts, such as the New Testament (1 Cor. 7:27), it refers to divorce or the dissolution of the marriage bond.

5. “perceived” νοητὴν (in its accusative feminine singular form) is an Ancient Greek word meaning intelligible, mental, or perceptible by the mind or intellect rather than by the physical senses. It is related to the Greek word νους, which means mind or intellect. The term is primarily used in philosophical and theological contexts to describe non-physical or incorporeal concepts, such as "mental essence" (νοητὴν οὐσίαν), which refers to rational, spiritual beings like angels, as opposed to material or sensible things. Plato, for example, used the term to describe an "intelligible substance" (οὐσίαν νοητὴν) of the soul.

6. Josephus, On the Antiquities of the Jews 18.63-64

7. “community” [φῦλον] φῦλον is an Ancient Greek word meaning "race," "tribe," "class," "stock," or "kind," referring to a group of people, gods, animals, or other beings sharing common descent or characteristics, and it's the root for English words like phylum (biological classification) and phylogeny (evolutionary history). It signifies a shared origin or grouping, from humans to divine beings.

8. The oldest Oecumenius manuscript reads “church.” But Oecumenius manuscripts 203 and 240 has the correct reading of “testimony.” Oecumenius also uses the word “testimony” below in the comments.

9. “Isaiah”. The manuscripts say Isaiah, and perhaps Oecumenius originally erred in giving credit to Isaiah for the citation, which the correct prophet was Zechariah. The Church Fathers often quoted Scripture from

memory, which goes to show how well read they were, even though they may make a minor error like this every once in a while.

10. Satan's fall was a swift and definitive expulsion from his original place in heaven due to his sin of pride and rebellion. This event is described using imagery of sudden judgment, such as "fall like lightning from heaven" in Luke 10:18.

11. Cyril of Alexandria, Frag in 1 Pet 3:19-20. “Here Peter answers the question which some objectors have raised, namely, if the incarnation was so beneficial, why was Christ not incarnated for such a long time, given that he went to the spirits which were in prison and preached to them also? In order to deliver all those who would believe, Christ taught those who were alive on earth at the time of his incarnation, and these others acknowledged him when he appeared to them in the lower regions, and thus they too benefited from his coming. Going in his soul, he preached to those who were in hell, appearing to them as one soul to other souls. When the gatekeepers of hell saw him, they fled; the bronze gates were broken open, and the iron chains were undone. And the only-begotten Son shouted with authority to the suffering souls, according to the word of the new covenant, saying to those in chains: —Come out!‖ and to those in darkness: —Be enlightened.‖ In other words, he preached to those who were in hell also, so that he might save all those who would believe in him. For both those who were alive on earth during the time of his incarnation and those who were in hell had a chance to acknowledge him. The greater part of the new covenant is beyond nature and tradition, so that while Christ was able to preach to all those who were alive at the time of his appearing and those who believed in him were blessed, so too he was able to liberate those in hell who believed and acknowledged him, by his descent there. However, the souls of those who practiced idolatry and outrageous ungodliness, as well as those who were blinded by fleshly lusts, did not have the power to see him, and they were not delivered.”

12. The τάγματα is the plural of τάγμα in Greek, which primarily means a military unit, order, or body (such as a company, battalion, regiment), especially the elite Byzantine regiments.

CHAPTER 7

Revelation 7:1-8 ***After this, I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, so that no wind would blow on the earth or on the sea or on any tree. Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God, and he cried out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying, "[Do not harm the earth]*** [1] ***or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads." And I heard the number of those who were sealed: one hundred and forty-four thousand from every tribe of the sons of Israel. Then he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of every tribe, twelve thousand sealed from each tribe."***

From here, the events that occurred to the Jews in the war against the Romans are clearly shown to the evangelist, which became a cause for them regarding the cross and the mockery against the Lord.

For the *four angels who hold the four corners* of the land of the Jews guarded so that none of the Jews worthy of death might escape, perhaps casting into them cowardice of flight or some difficulty or a longing for a foreign land and for their wives and loved ones, which is figuratively indicated by *the holding of the four corners* of Judea.

As for the control *of the four winds*, which means that neither *on the earth nor at sea nor upon any* tree should they blow, it signifies that no relief or interval could be found for them in war, nor any easing of their hardships, neither for those fighting on land nor for those engaged in naval battles. For many naval battles were fought during the time of Josephus, nor did those attending to agriculture and the care of plants escape this fate. For all were utterly

overtaken by calamities: cities set on fire, land ravaged, and crops destroyed. Josephus thoroughly details all these events in his account of the siege of Jerusalem[2].

Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God, and he cried out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying, "*Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until the servants of our God* have been sealed." The divine *angel* is said to come *from the east*, where the sun rises, but not from the west or the evening, symbolizing announcing of the Gospel and promises of blessings.

But now the *seal* is set, and the prophet, foreseeing in spirit, said: "The light of your face, Lord, has been marked upon us." (Ps. 4:6) It is well, then, that no one be wronged until those worthy of salvation among the Jews are sealed, so that the righteous do not suffer alongside the unwilling sinners.

And he says that *one hundred and forty thousand were sealed*; for many were those who believed in Christ from among the Jews, who owed their salvation from the common destruction to this number. And those who spoke with Paul in Jerusalem bear witness: "Look, brother, how many myriads of Jews have believed." (Acts 21:20)

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON ACTS 21:20
"Look, brother, how many myriads." They advise, they do not impose this on those around James; therefore they persuade. For it was an act of accommodation, not of legislation. Therefore this was not a limitation of the preaching, but accommodation. For those in Jerusalem who had believed from among the Jews wished still to observe the legal customs.

It was not only reasonable to spare the faithful but also those who, in ignorance and deception, cooperated with the crucifixion of the

Lord, concerning whom He said: "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." (Luke 23:34) Cyril[3], in his thirteenth book Against Julian, states that this prayer of the Lord is not found in the Gospels according to the pagans, but it is indeed present among us. And not only these individuals but also those who were not present at that time, or who were residing in Jerusalem, and therefore did not partake in the impious counsel of the accursed chief priests regarding the crucifixion, or even those who were present but did not share in the guilt of the pollution, for He blessed all under heaven, having opposed or rejected the godless council of the lawless; all of whom it was reasonable to be later sealed by the faith of Christ. For the angel would not have otherwise called them servants of God; of whom, when some were preserved, the rest, being evil, defected even to the Romans and were thoroughly corrupted, “becoming a spectacle to the world and to angels and men” (1 Cor. 4:9) in a different manner, and not as Paul spoke concerning the divine apostles. Of these, again Josephus[4] is a witness, enumerating the greatest number, tens of thousands, due to the famine.

The equality is according to *the number of those sealed* and also those who have believed *from each tribe*. It hints at an equal zeal and a unanimous confession of faith, even if from this tribe more were saved and believed in Christ, and from another fewer, He who was dishonored by the Jews; but by us and indeed by all the heavenly creation is now worshiped, always and forever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

[Fifth Discourse]

These things, which the discourse has narrated, have been demonstrated to the divine evangelist concerning those sealed from Israel by blood and therefore saved, and also those who have believed. But so that nothing may be lacking in his vision, the

prophecy reveals to him the countless myriads of the nations, who after these things run to faith, being present both around the Lord and at the divine throne. For since the Lord is said to arrive at the second coming, which has not yet been announced in the vision, the saints are then "caught up in clouds" to meet the Savior, as the divine apostle has previously described them being caught up. (1 Thess. 4:17)

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON 1 THESSALONIANS 4:17
"On the clouds." On the vehicle of God. For even Christ was taken up by a cloud. If he is about to come, why then are the faithful seized? So that they may meet him, it is an honor. Just as when a king enters a city, some meet him with honor while the condemned remain inside awaiting the judge, so then the righteous are seized, while the sinners, even if they are believers, remain.

The vision also shows that they have attained the blessedness reserved for them. For what could be more worthy than to be with Christ and to behold the divine throne? Behold what he says:

> **Revelation 7:9-17** ***After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude, which no one could number, from every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands; and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne." And all the holy angels***[5] ***stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever. Amen." Then one of the elders spoke and said to me, saying, "These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and where did they come from?" I said to him, "my lord, you know." And he said to***

me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation; they have washed[6] their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, they are before the throne of God and worship Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne will spread His tabernacle over them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; neither shall the sun strike them, nor any heat; for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters; and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

The countless myriads of the nations, therefore, who have received the faith of Christ and have attained the blessed end, have inherited the glorious place, standing before the Lord and His Father's throne, as was said before.

It is necessary for them to be *clothed in white robes*, a sign of the purity existing in their life.

The *palm branches*, being symbols of victory, are said to boast of the victory of Christ both over the invisible enemies and the visible ones.

They proclaim: "*Salvation belongs to our God and to the Lamb*," acknowledging that salvation is with them, confessing that those sealed as servants of God have been preserved from the total destruction of the world.

When the *thanksgiving* had been made, the liturgical orders in heaven, together with the *elders*, responded with "*Amen*," applying their own consent to the things that had been said.

Then also the divine *angels* themselves bring a hymn to God, honoring Him with seven praises, which, as mentioned before, signifies the unending praise of the angels' glorification; for the number seven is perfect.

And one of the elders asking the evangelist who those from the nations were, who were *clothed in white robes*, was not out of ignorance, but rather to provoke him to understand the matters concerning them.

Therefore, he says that *these are the ones who come out of the great tribulation*; for the righteous did not only endure a considerable struggle but also a very great one under the dominion of the Antichrist.

And it says that *they washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb*; indeed, it was more fitting for the robes dyed in blood to become crimson rather than white. How then have they become white? Because baptism, which is accomplished through the death of the Lord, as it seems to the most wise Paul (Rom. 6:3), acts as a cleanser of all impurity arising from sin, rendering those who are baptized in it white and pure.

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON ROMANS 6:3
"We were baptized into his death." To die a death like his, or to be shown to have died completely and most beneficially, this is accomplished through baptism. For when we are baptized we put off sins, which the death of Christ began to effect. For he died also for our sins, wishing to set us free from them. Thus the death of Christ effected the putting off and the mortifying of sins, and in so far as it could it bore the whole burden. What remains is only our faith and perception and will. These things are manifested through baptism; as it is performed, the death of Christ becomes all the more apparent in how it purchased salvation. Therefore he rightly says, "We were baptized into his death," as if into dying a death like his, burying sins by baptism, and that the profit of his saving death should be shown most clearly through all things, and that by baptism we should introduce our mind and will and faith toward the completion of salvation. He uses a more admonishing tone to explain how we die to sin, and says: "Do you not know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?" For baptism imitates death; for this is what it signifies, "We were baptized into his death." Even if baptism is not a bodily death, it is nevertheless a death to sins. "Through baptism into death." Since in being baptized we confess that we have died to the world and renounce sin and the Devil.

But also the partaking of the life-giving blood of Christ grants this: for the Lord says that it is poured out for many and for the forgiveness of many concerning His own blood. (Matt. 26:28)

These, therefore, *worship* God forever; and God dwells among them. One of the saints said that the dwelling of God is the unceasing remembrance of Him that remains in the souls of the saints; therefore, God reasonably dwells there. They *worship Him day and night*.

They will hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; for previously, those from the nations came through every kind of trial. But now they will be satisfied with the countless blessings.

Nor will the sun strike them anymore, he says. The temptation of the *sun* is interpreted in various ways in the Holy Scripture; in one instance, the prophet says that "the sun will not harm you by day, nor will the moon by night," (Ps. 120:6) while in another, the evangelist writes that when the sun shone, it dried up the seeds that had sprouted in the rocky ground (Matt. 13:5), interpreting the *sun* as a temptation. He therefore says in the present passage that no trial would harm them any longer; for they are deemed worthy by Christ to be shepherded and to be nourished at the springs of living water.

And God says He *will wipe away every tear from their eyes*. For those who have therefore lived and struggled with gentleness owe no useless tears, nor "weeping or gnashing of teeth," (Matt. 13:42, 50; 24:51) but all things are good and extraordinary.

Translator's notes for chapter 7.

1. In the manuscripts of the commentary by Oecumenius, there is a gap (lacuna) in the Scripture text. The missing section reads, "Do not harm the earth", but I added it to avoid confusion.

2. Josephus, The Jewish War 5.567-69; 6.420-25.

3. Cyril of Alexandria, Against Julian 13. Note, some early manuscripts, including P75 (dated approx. AD 175–225) and Codex Vaticanus (4th century), omit the verse.

4. Josephus, The Jewish War 5.567-69.

5. "*And all the angels*". The primary reading in the critical text reads, "and the holy ones of the elders". There are other Oecumenius manuscripts that reads "and the angels", that being, 203 (Salonika) and 240 (Athos). In this instance I chose to use the reading in a couple of later manuscripts instead of the reading found in some of the earlier manuscripts, simply because it is the correct reading and in my opinion, it is probably what Oecumenius originally wrote. Older manuscripts do not always equal the correct readings in all cases.

6. "*they have washed their robes*". Like pointed out in note 5, the primary reading chosen by the editor of the critical text chose to use a variant reading different than the correct reading found in the manuscripts of the book of Revelation. The primary reading in the critical text reads "they have enlarged their robes". Which means that the older manuscript reading has ἐπλάτυναν, while to correct reading is ἔπλυναν, which means "washed." ἐπλάτυναν is an obvious scribal error because even when Oecumenius comments on it he uses "washed" [ἔπλυναν],not "enlarged" [ἐπλάτυναν]. The manuscripts with the correct reading is 203 (Salonika) and 240 (Athos). Using an obvious scribal error simply because it is in an older manuscript is astonishing to me.

CHAPTER 8

Revelation 8:1-2 ***And when he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. Then I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.***

Perhaps someone who is very meticulous might analyze what has been said and say to me: Oh you, what are you doing? Have you perhaps forgotten what was said in the prologues of this Revelation? For it was also said that the first voice I heard was

like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things.” (Rev. 4:1) And you have become a narrator to us of things not yet come to pass but already happened, recounting the birth of the Lord, the temptation, the teachings and divine signs, the lashes and bonds and the wounds inflicted by Pilate, the cross and the death, and the resurrection and the ascent, or rather, the return to Heaven. To this I would say: most certainly you have heard, my friend, and some of the things that will happen, whenever we recount the righteous among the nations together with Israel around the divine throne, and those who exist with the Lord.

And now you also hear in the breaking of the *seventh seal*. For the one who said to the evangelist, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things," (Rev. 4:1) did not remove from him the ability to see anything that had happened before, but along with those, he also revealed what was to come. Therefore, listen.

The breaking of the *seventh seal* has accomplished for us the most perfect glory; for no longer is the release from sins and the turning back to God and from God to us as before, but rather the indescribable blessings: to be called children of God, “heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ,”(Rom. 8:17) brothers and friends and children of Christ, to reign with Him (2 Tim. 2:12) and to be glorified together, (Rom. 8:17) and “what no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor has entered into the heart of man, these good things.” (1 Cor. 2:9) What then is the breaking of the *seventh seal*? It is the second coming of the Lord and the restoration of all good things. For although some are delivered to punishment for their sins, the purpose of Christ and the foundation of the Incarnation is that all become heirs of His kingdom.

Therefore, when the *seventh seal* was broken, it is said that *there was silence for about half an hour*, as the King of creation was

about to come, and all angelic and supernatural powers were overwhelmed by the surpassing glory of the One arriving, and for this reason, there was silence.

Then it is said that *seven trumpets* were given to *the seven angels* so that they might sound them as a king takes his place. With these same trumpets, the dead were also about to be awakened; for the wise apostle to the Thessalonians, writing about divine matters, says in the first epistle that "the Lord Himself will descend with a command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God." (1 Thess. 4:16)

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON 1 THESSALONIANS 4:16
"*For the Lord Himself*." And he gives the reason why those who were to die beforehand were not prevented. ***"with the voice of an archangel."*** He says "the voice of an archangel," that is, the command given to the angels appointed to gather, making all ready, as if the Judge had arrived. For the calling up of into the air those whom he received transformed in incorruption is the command of Christ. But the angels make ready those scattered to the ends of the world to be gathered into one, this being commanded by the archangel. **"*and with the trumpet of God*."** Thus, the trumpets on Mount Sinai were types of these. For since a king was present, it was fitting that trumpets sound. **"*and the dead in Christ*."** Those in Christ, that is, the faithful, will be raised first, and the rest last, so as not to be caught off guard, nor to be about to meet him. **"*Then we who are alive*."** After this he says, "both the living and those who are left, those who are worthy, together with those who have already died will be caught up." Therefore do not suppose that the dead will be raised with difficulty. For the catching up will be together. **"*On the clouds*."** On the vehicle of God. For even Christ was taken up by a cloud. If he is about to come, why then are the faithful seized? So that they may meet him — it is an honor. Just as when a king enters a city, some meet him with honor while the condemned remain inside awaiting the judge, so then the righteous are seized, while the sinners, even if they are believers, remain.

And again, he says, "for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible." (1 Cor. 15:52)

"in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." Or may this also be understood in this way? But the meaning must first be briefly explained; the evangelist John says in the Apocalypse that the end will not come upon all men at once, but will come to them in part by the mercy of God, so that those who remain of the first to perish may, through fear of those who have been previously consumed, come to repentance; and he states this teaching in the breaking of the seventh seal of the book. If you hold these things thus, you will understand the phrase "*in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye*" to be said collectively, and fittingly applying to both, so that it shall be thus: we shall not all fall asleep, that is, die, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, because the end comes in part, according to the account in the Apocalypse; yet all of us shall be changed *in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye*, at the last trumpet; for the first trumpets, seven as they are according to the Apocalypse, do not raise the dead, but end humankind, whereas the final one effects both the resurrection and the change of those already risen "*in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye*," together with creation; for creation also will be freed from corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God, as it is said in the Epistle to the Romans. (Rom. 8:21) "*in a moment*." He furthermore said something admirable, namely that such great miracles will be imperceptible in time at the same time as the sound of the trumpet: Question. Since according to certain manuscripts these words of the Apostle are read: "We shall all indeed sleep, but we shall not all be changed." According to others, however: "We shall not all indeed sleep, yet we shall all be changed." I ask to be taught which of the editions ought to be chosen, and what is signified by these words. Answer. I think that according to either edition, since the old manuscripts include both, if one accepts reverently, it will not depart from the apostle's intention. Therefore the passage "We shall all sleep, but we shall not all be changed" must be understood thus: that indeed we shall all endure sleep and slumber through death; but we shall not all be changed into glory and freedom; which the apostle states elsewhere more plainly, saying: "If indeed we are clothed, we shall not be found naked." (2 Cor. 5:3) Next to this indeed: "Not all of us will sleep, yet we shall all be changed," it must be understood in this way, that we shall not truly sleep a prolonged sleep requiring a tomb and ending to corruption, but they will undergo a brief death which will be found to be instantaneous: for them a prolonged sleep will not be necessary, on account of the sudden resurrection having been made*; yet all will be changed*, that is, they will put on incorruption. ***"For the trumpet will sound."*** Then, showing

what is to be believed concerning those things which will happen, he says: ***"For the trumpet will sound, and the dead shall be raised,"*** evidently changed and incorruptible; and we, that is, those of us who remain alive until that time; for he speaks of them and not of himself: "*and we shall be changed*." For among these there will be no resurrection: since they will not have slept, but only an alteration. Truly the dead who had previously died *will be raised incorruptible*, but those who then live—how will they be raised? They will only, as it were in an instant, be transformed to *immortality*.

<u>Revelation 8:3-6</u> ***And an angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel. Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth; and there were voices, sounds of thunder, lightning flashes, and an earthquake. And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound them.***

The *altar* is said to be *incense* [λιβανωτὸν], as it receives the incense. When Christ appeared, as a kind of first fruits and precious offering, *the prayers of the saints* are presented to Him by the angels who oversee us. These prayers are naturally fragrant and become even more fragrant through the cooperation of the holy *angels*.

Therefore, it has been said that *much incense offerings was given to him*. Indeed, it was given by God as a clear sign to entrust humans to the angels and to make their prayers welcome. Those who receive it grant a fragrant aroma *to the prayers of the saints*.

And it is said that *the smoke of the incense rises in the prayers of the saints from the hand of the angel*. Do you see that *the prayers of the saints* became more fragrant before God through the *angel*?

Then the divine angel took the *censer, filled it with the fire* of God, *and threw it to the earth; and there were voices, sounds of thunder, lightning flashes, and an earthquake*. Perhaps one of the angels cast this divine fire upon Mount Sinai, and there were sounds of thunder, voices, trumpets, flashes of lightning, and the mountain was covered with smoke as God descended upon it. Just as then the *thunder* and the signs preceded, so now these things have preceded the glorious coming of the Lord.

Then the *angels* also sounded *trumpets*, signaling the presence of God (Ex. 19:16-19); for even then the trumpets sounded loudly.

<u>Revelation 8:7</u> ***And the first angel sounded: and there came hail and fire mixed with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of the earth was burned up.***

Of the righteous, having been deemed worthy of the blessed end[1] [λήξεως], as it is said to me concerning the release of the sixth seal at the fulfilment, like those who are also caught up before the Lord's coming in the clouds, into the air so that they may meet the coming Lord according to the testimony of the apostle presented to me there (1 Thess. 4:17), the vision then proceeds to the end of the rest of humanity and to the punishment of sinners. When a complete defeat is about to occur, various forms of death and the punishment of the impious will inevitably follow; most of these will be brought about by *fire*, for on that day *fire* is destined to reveal itself, as the divine apostle wrote to the Corinthians in his first epistle. (1 Cor. 3:13) For if there are many abodes of rest, as the Lord says (Jn. 14:2), and different places of punishment[2], the

same trumpets that bring death to those on earth will also afterward awaken the dead.

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON 1 CORINTHIANS 3:13
"For the day will declare." He calls the day the day of judgment.

What then does it mean when *the first angel sounded* the trumpet, and *hail and fire* are *cast down upon the earth*? One who considers this literally will not stray from the correct interpretation; and if one understands it figuratively, nothing inappropriate will be said. The *fire* in this context signifies destruction and deep suffering; it represents the pain of sinners who see the saints "caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord," (1 Thess. 4:17) while they themselves remain on earth dishonored and deemed unworthy of any consideration.

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON 1 THESSALONIANS 4:17
"On the clouds." On the vehicle of God. For even Christ was taken up by a cloud. If he is about to come, why then are the faithful seized? So that they may meet him, it is an honor. Just as when a king enters a city, some meet him with honor while the condemned remain inside awaiting the judge, so then the righteous are seized, while the sinners, even if they are believers, remain.

For the word metaphorically refers to sinners as *trees* and *grass* burning, because of their folly, and the insensibility of the soul, which is wooden and suitable for burning.

Revelation 8:8-9 ***And the second angel sounded his trumpet; and something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea; and a third of the sea became blood, and a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.***

The divine apostle writes to the Romans, saying: "that creation was subjected to futility, not willingly but because of the one who subjected it, in hope that creation itself will be set free from the bondage of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God." (Rom. 8:20-21)

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON ROMANS 8:20-21
"For creation was subjected to futility." That is, to corruption. For this was condemned because of our sins. ***"Not willingly, but because of him who subjected it in hope."*** He says this is the work of Christ's power, that even the things heard were subjected in hope. For it itself, he says, hopes for deliverance; therefore it was subjected in hope of deliverance. Then he explains to himself in what hope, that even creation itself will be set free. ***"For even creation itself will be set free from the bondage of corruption into the freedom of the glory."*** Into freedom, that is, into the freedom of glory; that is, through us creation too will be incorruptible, just as through us it became corrupt.

But when will it be freed? When there will be "new heavens and a new earth according to His promises," as Peter proclaims to us, writing in his second epistle. (2 Peter 3:13) In order for the earth, when it is renewed, to be freed from corruption and to become new, it is necessary that the *sea* also undergo this transformation; for the *sea* is within the earth. And how could it be purified itself, except through the cleansing of fire? Therefore, fire having fallen into it, it transformed the sea into blood, and killed *a third of* those within it. This, then, in relation to the letter and the perceptible, you might also conceive of as the *sea*, both by analogy and according to the laws of transformation, representing the present life because of the turmoil within it and the varied distractions; and fish and *ships*, symbolizing people immersed in the salty and bitter mud of sins, who, overwhelmed by sorrows, will ultimately fall into fruitless regrets over the lives they have lived.

<u>Revelation 8:10-11</u> ***And the third angel sounded his trumpet; and a great star, blazing like a torch, fell from heaven on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. The name of the star is called Wormwood. A third of the waters turned bitter, and many people died from the waters because they were made bitter.***

Naomi, who long ago suffered many afflictions concerning her children and other misfortunes, was called Bitter. (Ruth 1:20) Bitterness serves as a symbol of the remaining extraordinary hardships. This bitterness is what we sinners experienced at that time, becoming bitter over the glory of the saints, because, indeed, although such good things were prepared for humanity, we ourselves exchanged the present for what was to come. I believe this refers to the falling of the *star*, which, having angered God, made the *waters bitter*.

Waters are metaphorically called humans, as stated by the prophet regarding “the sounds of many waters; the wonders of the sea's waves are marvelous,” (Ps. 92:4) and again “the rivers lifted up their voices, saying, Lord, the rivers lifted up their voices; the rivers lifted up their waves." (Ps. 92:3) These things are to be understood as a form of allegorical speech. However, it must not be disregarded that such events and similar ones occur perceptibly.

<u>Revelation 8:10-11</u> ***And the fourth angel sounded his trumpet; and a third of the sun was struck, and a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of the stars were darkened, and a third of the day did not shine, and likewise the night. And I saw and heard an eagle flying at midday, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three other angels who are about to sound."***

We have been taught by Joel the prophet that "*the sun*" will turn "into darkness, and the moon into blood before the coming of the day of the Lord, the great and glorious day." (Joel 2:31) This will happen when all these things take place. And Peter said in the second of his epistles: "The day of the Lord will come like a thief, during which the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved by fire." (2 Peter 3:10) But the Lord himself, according to Matthew (24:29), says that "immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven."

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON 2 PETER 3:10
The uncertainty of the Lord's coming is signified as a ***theft***, when it is least expected, through the thief and the night: through the night indeed, because of uncertainty; for all things in the night are uncertain: through the thief; because he is not expected; for no one will be robbed who expects a thief, but those who least expect him will be robbed. Therefore, the Lord also says that just as in the days of Noah there were men rejoicing in weddings and drinking, thinking nothing of the future calamity that would overtake them (Matt. 24:38), until the flood overwhelmed them: so too will the coming of the Lord suddenly come upon the wicked. The word ***"noise"*** indeed means sound. However, the sound of this kind is proper to ***fire*** in those things that are fed by fire. Note, however, that it has said the earth and what is in it must be burned up, but not men, but only destruction has been said concerning the wicked or their transgressions. For the way of the wicked will perish, but the wicked himself will not.

These things are now also taught through Revelation to occur at the end of the present age. But what does it mean that not all things on the earth, and in the sea and rivers, and also the elements in the heavens mentioned, will endure suffering, but only *a third of* them? This too is a precise demonstration of God's love for humanity, calling to repentance those people then living who are affected partially, not all the elements; and for those who do not turn back, it brings about total destruction thereafter. Such a thing the prophet also says: "he made a path by his anger, not sparing

their souls from death." (Ps. 78:50) For the partial and gradual manifestation of God's wrath[3], as if proceeding along a road, is a door opened by repentance, calling people through the fear of what is happening to change their minds. But if this does not advance among them, he does not spare their souls from death.

The *eagle* soaring *at midday*, lamenting over the calamities *on the earth*, may be understood as a divine messenger sympathizing with the affliction of humanity.

Translator's notes for chapter 8.

1. "end" [λήξεως] The word "λήξεως" (genitive case of λήξη) means expiration, expiry date, or final date (expiration, expiry, end) and refers to the end of a deadline, contract, license, or product.

2. Oecumenius and many Early Church Fathers believed that punishment in the afterlife is not a "one-size-fits-all" experience but is strictly proportional to the sins committed. Hippolytus of Rome taught that at the final judgment, everyone (men, angels, and demons) will receive a "recompense made to each," where those who loved evil receive punishment specific to their deeds. John Chrysostom, while presenting a vivid and materialist view of hell, he emphasized that the "intensity" of the fire or torment would vary based on the severity of the individual's transgressions.

3. "For the partial and gradual manifestation of God's wrath." This is in complete harmony with what Oecumenius said in his commentary on 1 Corinthians 15:51-53. He said, "The evangelist John says in the Apocalypse that the end will not come upon all men at once, but by God's mercy little by little and gradually: (Rev. 6,8,9,10,11) so that with the earlier ones passing away, those who remain, seized first by fear of the consumed, may come to repentance. He speaks however concerning the dogma about the solution of the seventh seal of the book."

CHAPTER 9

Revelation 9:1-4 ***And the fifth angel sounded his trumpet; and I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth, and he was given the key to the shaft of the abyss. Then smoke rose from the shaft like the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke. Locusts came out onto the earth, and they were given authority as the scorpions of the earth have authority. And it was commanded that they should not harm the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, except those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.***

Until now, the vision has been describing to us the manner and the kinds of plagues by which the completion is brought about, alternating both those on the earth and in the sky, and with them, the people. But now, as if the completion has already occurred and the resurrection has taken place, it recounts the punishments against the sinners.

He says, *I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth*, calling the star an angel of God who descended to the earth because of its brightness. For in it will be the judgment of the sinners, in a certain place that one of the holy prophets named "the Valley of Jehoshaphat." (Joel 3:2)

And it was said to him, *You are given the key to the shaft of the abyss*. The shaft of the abyss is called Gehenna.

Therefore, *smoke rose from the shaft*, like the smoke of a great fire burning in the shaft. Indeed, the *smoke* signifies not only fire but also darkness; "for the voice of the Lord interrupting the flame of fire," (Ps. 29:7) as spoken by the prophet, is interpreted by the saints as the ending of the illuminating fire from the Gehenna's fire, leaving only the burning fire together with darkness within it.

And it is said that *the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke* of the pit; not that these elements themselves were darkened, but that those cast into the pit, filled with *darkness* due to punishment, have the *air* and the *sun* unseen. For therefore one of the holy prophets also said: "The sun will be darkened at midday," (Amos 8:9) referring to the calamities of the Jews, not to the darkening of the sun itself, but to those suffering in tribulation who do not see the sun; for the magnitude of calamities is accustomed to be filled with darkness.

And from the smoke *locusts came out onto the earth*. I believe the term "locusts[1]" [ἀκρίδες] refers to worms, about which Isaiah says: "Their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched," (Isa. 66:24; Mark 9:48) possibly calling the worm the biting of the soul and the relentless and creeping pain.

And it was said that *they were given authority*, just *as the scorpions of the earth have authority*. And it was said to them *that they should not harm the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, except for the* humans alone, *who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads*, because the earth is undergoing a renewal. For it is said somewhere that “if you send forth your spirit, they shall be created, and you will renew the face of the earth.” (Ps. 104:30) It was no longer good to strike any of the creatures that inhabit the earth, neither *tree* nor any of the growing things, except only the humans; and among the humans, *those who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads*. For among the humans, some are entirely holy and pure, having taken possession of the space mentioned earlier, always united with Christ, and beholding the divine throne. Yet they are nevertheless holy, having been baptized, and bearing the sign of Christ *on their foreheads*, and not entirely despairing, though they have deeply defiled themselves by the absurdity of their actions; but, because of their baptism, as if being somewhat intermediate, they remain on earth in both virtue and vice, yet unpunished. For if this were not so,

how could those who are well-disposed manage the entrusted resources? It has been said by the Lord, "He who has authority over ten cities," and another “over five cities.” (Luke 19:17, 19.) As those who are about to rule the less capable, and yet the rulers remain completely unpunished. For who would choose to rule if they were to be punished and relentlessly hear the gnashing of teeth, and the inconsolable weeping (not of the holy ones, I do not say, but not even of ordinary people who nonetheless sympathize) unless he himself were also about to suffer similarly to those being punished for the sake of those under his care? The third fate of humans is indeed handed over to punishment, being sinners and impious, and not accepting the faith of Christ. Therefore, it is said that these people are struck; for they are not sealed with *the seal of God.*

> **<u>Revelation 9:5-6</u>** He says, ***And it was given to them a command not to kill them, but that they should be tormented for five months; and their torment was like the torment of scorpions when they strike a man. And in those days, people will seek death but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will flee from them.***

Could it be that some of the Fathers accepted the concept of restoration [ἀποκατάστασιν] from this point onward, saying that sinners are punished only up to this time, but thereafter no longer, as if they have been purified by the punishment[2]? But what should be done regarding the many others among the Fathers, and the approved Scriptures, which speak of the punishments of those who were then being punished as eternal? What then might one say, or how should one regulate the parts? One must blend the opinions of both sides. I say this as in a kind of exercise, and not as a definitive statement; for I add to the doctrine of the Church that which wishes the punishments in the future to be eternal, since

even this was said by the Lord in the Gospel according to Matthew, saying, "And these will go away into eternal punishment" (Matt. 25:46); and Isaiah said, "Their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched." (Isa. 66:24) As in an exercise, therefore, this must be said: a middle portion of each part of the path is to be marked out, because until a certain time—*five months*, as the present Revelation, having employed a certain secret number, has said—the sinners will be severely *tormented as if* stung *by a scorpion*; but after this, gradually, although we will not be entirely free from punishment, it will be to such an extent that we *will seek death and not find it*. For who would have a need to seek death for those who are not punished at all? *Death*, he says, *will flee from them*, for they share in punishment eternally.

> **Revelation 9:7-12** ***And the likenesses of the locusts were like horses prepared for battle, and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men, and they had hair like the hair of women, and their teeth were like the teeth of lions; and they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle; and they had tails like scorpions, and stings; and in their tails was their power to hurt men for five months. They had as king over them the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon. Woe, one has gone; behold, two more woes are coming.***

After this, the divine evangelist vividly and fearfully describes to us the nature of the worms. In each of the descriptions concerning them, one would marvel at the precision of the account; for he did not say that they had the *teeth of lions*, the *tails of scorpions*, or the *faces of men*, but rather, in each case, he presented a figurative

and parabolic representation of what was situated there, not the literal reality. Therefore, either their terrifying and astonishing nature is indicated through these images, or he truly sketched their form.

And they say there is a *king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek, Apollyon*. And the name is either appropriately made and suitable for those who engage in contemplation, or at least not only are they "ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation" according to the divine apostle (Heb. 1:14), but also spirits sent for punishment to those worthy of chastisement; such was also the one who, in one night, struck down one hundred eighty-five thousand Assyrians (2 Kings 19:35; Isa. 37:96), and those who set fire to the five cities of Sodom. (Gen. 19:2)

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS 1:14
Therefore, Gregory says in the second book "On the Son": ***"Are they not all ministering spirits?"*** He comforts them, saying: Christ is indeed the natural Son of God, but the angels are our servants: having been assigned this ministry, that they may do and administer all things so that we humans may be saved. For indeed, angels have frequently become ministers to men, as to Mary (Luke 1:26) and at the Lord's tomb (Matt. 28:2-7) and to Cornelius. (Acts 10:3) *[Gregory Nazianzen, Orations]*

Woe, he said, *one has gone; behold, two more woes are coming*. The woe [οὐαὶ] as an forceful expression indicates the severe afflictions present and those to come upon them. Therefore, he says that one punishment has been declared; two more remain to be spoken of.

Revelation 9:13-19 ***And the sixth angel sounded his trumpet; and I heard a loud voice from the horns of the golden altar before God, saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at***

the great river Euphrates." And the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour, day, month, and year, were released to kill a third of mankind. The number of the cavalry troops was myriads of myriads; and I heard their number. And therefore, I saw the horses in the vision, and those who sat on them had breastplates of fire, hyacinth, and brimstone; and the heads of the horses were like the heads of lions, and from their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone. From these three plagues, a third of mankind was killed by the fire, smoke, and brimstone that came out of their mouths; for the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails, which are like serpents with heads, and with them they do harm.

When *the angel sounded*, *I heard a voice* coming *from the horns of the altar*. *The horns of the altar*, he says, are those that stand out among the angels and surpass the others.

He calls the altar *golden* because of its honor and divine nature, made from precious material known to us, depicting a marvelous altar.

Just as we understood *the horns of the altar* to represent the rulers of the angels, so the altar itself symbolizes all the ministering spirits; because it offers a spiritual[3] [λογικήν] sacrifice to God.

Who then is *the voice that was heard from the horns of the altar*? It says, "*Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates*." The divine Scripture calls the apostate an angel, and I say it is Satan and those who have rebelled with him. For indeed, he has been handed over to us as if they are kept "in eternal chains under darkness," (Jude 6)[4] and as if they are condemned to the abyss of the sea.

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON JUDE 6
Those who had indeed received the honor of angelic position, since they did not remain in their origin, but corrupted the gift given to them

from the goodness of celestial life, were reserved and kept for judgment or condemnation on the day of great and intolerable punishment. For this also now signifies kept. According to what Christ said: "Who is prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matt. 25:41)

For in the second epistle of Peter it says, "For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them into chains of gloomy Tartarus, delivering them to be kept for judgment," (2 Peter 2:4) and in the epistle of Jude it refers to angels who "did not keep their own position, but left their own dwelling, in eternal chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day." (Jude 6) Indeed, the book of Job in the sea says that the apostate has been defiled in various ways by altering his form, size, and the bitterness of his character; and it also states that "he is mocked by the angels of God." (Job 41:25)

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON 2 PETER 2:4

"God did not spare the angels who sinned." He attacks those who were first cut off and says: If the angels who were in honor with God because of the immortality of their substance, when they had shaken off the yoke, sinned, they did not obtain forgiveness: much less will God spare men who cling to their own creation if they have sinned, ***"But chains of gloomy."*** This signifies the inevitability of condemnation. For with such chains, we certainly punish those condemned by us. But someone may say: Whence is such condemnation of the demons evident? From the demons themselves, for they plead in the Gospel (Luke 8:31) not to be cast into the abyss, as if all others might also suffer this. It must be understood, however, that although the argument is presented in a hypothetical manner, it is not truly so; for it has nothing else to respond to later, but is proposed only in appearance, while in truth it is a simple persuasive example: and for this reason, it will be said: for if it were as it seems, it would proceed thus: If angels, having sinned, were not spared, nor the ancient world, nor Sodom and Gomorrah, would He spare these? Certainly not; or even in this way: He will not spare them at all. However, He does not rashly approach those who are more distinguished; but wishing to show that these, while they sin, are more liable to punishment. Therefore, since these also hold a more honorable rank, as they are called to the apostleship, when they have fallen from the divine way, they also have a greater condemnation. From the hypothesis moved by a persuasive example, it did not provide what corresponded to the figure.

And Isaiah also cried out concerning him that “the sword of God will be brought down upon the dragon, the fleeing serpent, upon the crooked serpent; and he will destroy the dragon on that day who is in the sea.” (Isa. 27:1) And the prophet, speaking about him after all creatures have passed away, adds this concerning those who are in the sea: “This dragon which you have fashioned to mock him” (Ps. 104:26); following these words, the divine prophet Ezekiel also speaks concerning the Egyptian, saying: “You are like a lion among the nations, and like a dragon in the sea, and you mingle with your rivers.” (Ezek. 32:2)

No one, indeed, has transmitted a tradition to us that they were *bound in the Euphrates River*, nor will they ever be released, nor will people be punished through them. For Jude, who said that they are “bound with eternal chains,” forbade that they should ever be loosed; and the one who said through Isaiah that the Dragon in the sea will be destroyed on the day of judgment, declared that no one else would destroy him but that very one. And the Lord, sending forth in the Gospels those who have sinned into “the fire prepared for the Devil and his angels,” (Matt. 25:41) declared that He would use them as punishers and executors of justice, and that they themselves are destined to suffer punishment. How then could one understand the previously mentioned statement that they are *bound in the river Euphrates* and that they will be released and will themselves punish the sinners? I believe that what was said is metaphorical, as if it were a law established for every vision; for I consider that it refers to the angels who are bound to the divine contemplation that spiritually delights God.

The *river* is allegorically used to represent the divine, both by Isaiah, who says, "Behold, I will turn toward them like a river of peace, and like torrents washing over the glory of nations," (Isa.

66:12) and by the prophet, who states, "The impulses of the river delight the city of God." (Ps. 46:4)

And the Lord Himself said to John, in the twentieth section[5] concerning the Spirit, "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from his belly." (Jn. 7:38-39) He says that these are those released from the vision of God, sent as punishment to the impious; for he says these are the ones who are condemned for the present day.

Then, which *four angels* does he mention? Perhaps those narrated in Scripture: Michael, Gabriel, Uriel, and Raphael.

When this happened, they went out with an innumerable *cavalry* force. And he says this is the invincible power of the divine angels, accompanied by the greatest cavalry; and he says he saw those sitting on the *horses* wearing fiery, *hyacinth*, and divine *breastplates*.

The *fire* of wrath and punishment is a symbol;

the *hyacinth* signifies that those sent are heavenly, for heaven is akin to the *hyacinth*; and the godlike ones please God, as if they were divine, for to please is to sing. And who would please God more than the holy angels?

Then the vision varies and exalts the power of the holy angels, warning against *lions* and *fire*, *smoke* and divine beings and serpents, through all of which their terrible and incredible nature is signified.

Revelation 9:20-21 ***And the rest of the people, who were not killed by these plagues, neither repented from the works of their hands, so that they would not worship demons and the golden and silver and bronze and stone and wooden idols, which neither can see, nor hear, nor***

walk, and they did not repent from their murders, nor from their sorceries, nor from their thefts.

The prophet, striking the spiritual harp, recounted to us concerning those punished in Hades, saying to God: "that there is no one in death who remembers you; and in Hades, who will confess to you," (Ps. 6:6) depriving them both of joy according to God and repentance? For through the remembrance of God there is spiritual joy, for the same one writes that elsewhere he "remembered God and was glad," (Ps. 76:4) but through not confessing repentance—for confession is the declaration of those who have sinned, arising from remorse and turning back through shame that comes near to the soul.

For in truth, God has appointed for us two lives, the present and the future. In the present life, He has given us the ability and authority to govern ourselves according to reason; but in the future life, there will be recompense for what has been lived, and neither the present life is subject to judgment, unless perhaps someone is profitably reminded and urged to repentance, nor the future life is a state so that we might be reformed from a misused life to a better one. Since these things are so, how then has it been said concerning those punished there?

And the rest of the people, who were not killed by these plagues, neither repented from the works of their hands. It does not say that those who did not repent in that life, but that those still living, and not from obedience and seeing the things that were then to come, repented from these and those unlawful deeds. By this said *plague*, they do not die the intellectual death, calling punishment death, as they co-exist eternally with the wicked, unless they are punished by another, indeed worse, which, though attempting to say it, he wisely kept silent. May it happen that all of us become free; by the grace and generosity of our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom to the Father be glory with the Holy Spirit forever. Amen.

Translator's notes for chapter 9.

1. Locusts in Greek ἀκρίδες is the plural of ἀκρίς meaning "grasshopper, locust, cricket". Locust (in some cultures distinguished from a grasshopper and used as a food source)

2. Oecumenius has in mind the many prominent Early Church Fathers, particularly those in the East, believed in or hoped for some form of universalism (the ultimate salvation of all souls, also known as apokatastasis [ἀποκατάστασις], restoration of all things [τῶν πάντων], referring to the belief that all creation would eventually be restored to its original perfect state.). This was a widely held view for the first few centuries of Christianity, although it was not universally accepted and was later condemned as heresy by the Second Council of Constantinople in 553 AD. In Alexandria, this school, which included the highly influential theologians Clement of Alexandria and Origen, was a major center for universalist thought. Origen, in particular, was the most famous and influential advocate of the view, although his teachings were later rejected by some. The Cappadocian Fathers, several figures associated with this group, including St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Basil of Caesarea, and St. Gregory of Nazianzus, are often cited as universalists or at least hopeful for universal salvation.

3. "spiritual" [λογικήν] The Greek word λογικήν is the accusative singular feminine form of the adjective λογικός, which means reasonable, rational, or spiritual. Derived from the Greek noun λόγος (logos, meaning "word" or "reason"), its specific meaning can vary slightly based on context.

4. Oecumenius says in his commentary on Jude 6, "Those who had indeed received the honor of angelic position, since they did not remain in their origin, but corrupted the gift given to them from the goodness of celestial life, were reserved and kept for judgment or condemnation on the day of great and intolerable punishment. For this also now signifies kept. According to what Christ said: "Who is prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matt. 25:41)"

5. "in the twentieth section". Oecumenius gives no explanation in this commentary to why he divided his commentary into 12 discourses and multiple sections. The Early Church Fathers did not use the modern system of biblical chapters and verses, as these divisions did not exist until many centuries after their time. Instead, they referenced Scripture

by book and often by thematic sections, continuous quotation, or general location within the text. There were some early attempts at division. As early as the fourth century, the New Testament was divided into topical sections called κεφάλαιον (headings). However, these divisions do not correspond to the modern chapters.

[Sixth Discourse]

CHAPTER 10

Moreover, John, the divine narrator in the present discourse, recounts the events that occurred when the sixth angel sounded his trumpet, which I have not yet fully explained all at once, since the fifth discourse is so long, I therefore did not reveal it in full. But what else does he write that has happened?

> **Revelation 10:1-4** ***And I saw a strong angel descending from heaven, clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow was upon his head; his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire. And he had in his hand a little open scroll. And he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the land, and cried out with a loud voice, as when a lion roars. And when he cried out, the seven thunders uttered their voices. And when the seven thunders had spoken, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Seal up what the seven thunders have spoken, and do not write it down."***

Therefore, those who, while still alive, having heard or even seen the punishments inflicted upon the wrongdoers, did not repent, but remained wicked as previously stated, John says that *I saw an angel descending from heaven*, bringing images of punishments.

He says that his vision and form were as follows: he was , *clothed with a cloud*. The cloud symbolizes the eternal and invisible nature of the holy angels; for the cloud is a symbol of the unseen. The prophet, indicating the invisible nature of God, describes “clouds and thick darkness are round about him.” (Ps. 97:2)

And a rainbow was upon his head; as if the head and the foremost among the good angels were saying, it is brightness; for angels are beings of light. (2 Cor. 11:14)

And his face is said to be like the sun; and this too is an appearance of pure brightness. But the *rainbow* is the brightness of a created nature, signifying virtue; therefore, the brightness of the rainbow is not uniform, but varied, indicating all the virtues of the angels. The *sun*, indeed, signifies their natural brilliance by a gleaming light. Therefore, it was surrounded by a *rainbow*, for virtues are around us; but its face resembled the sun, for in us all natural excellence is present in abundance.

And his feet were like pillars of fire. The *fire* signifies the punishment that he came to bring upon the impious. And he is said to have held *in his hand a tiny open scroll* [βιβλιδάριον][1]. Daniel, recalling such small scrolls [βιβλίων], says: “before him sat a judge, and scrolls [βίβλοι] were opened.” (Dan. 7:10) The tiny scroll [βιβλιδάριον] was one in which were recorded the names and the multitude of the very impious who were to be punished. Therefore, it was also diminutively called a "tiny scroll" [βιβλιδάριον], since it is a kind of scroll [βίβλου]. Both terms have been used in the Holy Scripture, in which the names of all men are written, according to what was previously stated by me. The term "tiny scroll" [βιβλιδάριον] refers to the record containing the names of the exceedingly impious. For the worshippers of idols were not so numerous, nor marked by murders and poisonings and other afflictions that would serve to fill an entire scroll small [βιβλίον] with the diseases they caused.

And he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the land. This was a sign both of the greatness of the saints and a sign that those who have sinned on the earth as well as those in the sea, such as shipwrecked individuals or others who have committed evil deeds, would bear the consequences of punishment.

And he cried out with a loud voice, as when a lion roars. And it is said that the holy angel of wrath was symbolically represented as having roared like a lion, signifying the judgment against the impious.

And when he said, "he cried out," *the seven thunders uttered their voices*. The seven thunders refer to the seven ministering spirits whose memory has been mentioned earlier; therefore, it is placed after the article. He says, "*the seven thunders*," referring to those seven spirits to which the reference pertains. What then is the meaning of the seven spirits crying out? It is that they also fully correspond with the punishments inflicted upon sinners, offering a grateful hymn of praise to God, acknowledging that all things have been done justly. At the same time, the one who cried out clarified the various forms of punishments.

He says that he was *about to write* what was spoken to the seven spirits. And *I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Seal up what the seven thunders have spoken, and do not write it down*." The act of sealing, in one sense, involved impressing the memory firmly upon your mind; but the prohibition against writing it down was a matter of divine economy, for which God knows the reason. Perhaps the punishments that are glorified are actually lighter, and worthy of the goodness of the one who punishes, making them shameful to humans.

What do Gregory[2] the Divine and Evagrius[3], the great authority on Gnostic matters, say about these things? Gregory asserts that “the punishment surrounding Adam is an act of generosity, for therefore I believe God punishes.” And in another context,

"neither mercy is indiscriminate nor is judgment merciless." Evagrius, however, declares that "the more recent and worldly thinkers should be forgotten regarding the superior discourse on judgment; for they do not understand the suffering of the rational soul condemned to ignorance[4]."

Revelation 10:5-7 ***And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven and swore by the living one who lives forever and ever, who created the heavens and all that is in them, the earth and all that is in it, and the sea and all that is in it, that there will be no more delay. But in the days of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound the trumpet, the mystery of God will be fulfilled, as he declared to his servants the prophets.***[5]

According to the form of omission, it is stated: for it says that when *the seventh angel is about to sound the trumpet*, all the punishment against the impious *will be fulfilled*, being both various and many. However, it does not say that this will happen when he sounds the trumpet in the vision, since the other events have not yet occurred at that time, but rather when he sounds the trumpet at the appropriate time.

When this occurs, he says that *the mystery of God will be fulfilled, as he declared to his servants the prophets*. For the prophets foretold up until the judgment and the recompense of the good and the wicked, but not after that. Therefore, when the seventh angel sounds, the mystery will be completed, and every prophetic announcement will come to an end.

Revelation 10:8-11 ***And I heard a voice from heaven again, speaking with me and saying, "Go, take the little***

scroll [βιβλίον] ***that is open in the hand of the angel who stands upon the sea and upon the land." And I went to the angel and said to him, "Give me the little scroll." And he said to me, "Take it and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey." And I took the tiny scroll*** [βιβλιδάριον] ***from the hand of the angel and ate it; and it was sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter. And he said to me, "You must prophesy again concerning peoples, nations, languages, and many kings."***

And I heard a voice from heaven again, speaking. What did it say? *Go, take the little scroll* [βιβλίον] *that is open in the hand of the angel*. *When I took* it, he said, *I ate it, and it was sweet in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter*. Since the divine evangelist both saw and heard the punishments inflicted upon the impious, so that they might be disciplined through deeds and not by hearing alone, and so that the lawlessness of men, which is both *bitter* and detestable before God, might be recognized as repulsive, he teaches this through vision. For he did not know this from experience, being a holy man and a virgin[6], and through this he came to understand that the wrath of God against the impious is just.

The *little scroll* [βιβλίον] contained both the names and the sins of those who had greatly erred, as previously stated[7]. It was therefore commanded to *eat* this, so that, through a certain taste and intellectual experience, the bitterness of the sins might be realized through a vision.

And having eaten, he found them *sweet* to the *mouth*, but *bitter* to the *stomach* after consumption; for such is every sin. It is *sweet* in its operation, but *bitter* in its outcome. For it becomes the cause of punishment, and also, through repentance, it embitters those who have committed it. Such was also the tree forbidden by God in

Paradise, which all interpret as leading to sin, producing knowledge of both good and evil (Gen. 2-3); sweet indeed in taste, but evil after experience.

And he says to me, "*You must prophesy again concerning peoples, nations, languages, and many kings*," as if he said: because you have already seen in a vision both the end of the present age and the wrath against the ungodly, do not consider the day of the end to be present in deed; there is a long time in between, during which *you must* also *prophesy* to many *nations and kings*. Therefore, until now, the divine John prophesies through the Gospel, through his Catholic Epistles, and through the present Revelation; for everything has been spoken and foretold to him in the Spirit.

Translator's notes for chapter 10.

1. In this passage, the usage of three variations of the Greek words for scroll is used by Oecumenius βιβλιδάριον, βιβλίων (plural for Βιβλίον), and βίβλοι (plural for Βίβλος). In Ancient Greek, these three terms are etymologically linked through a series of diminutives, where each successive word traditionally refers to a smaller or more specific version of a "book." Βίβλος, originally, this referred to the inner bark of the papyrus plant (the material used for writing). It evolved to mean a complete "book" or "record," often implying a significant or formal work. In the Septuagint and New Testament, it is used for major records like the "Book of the Generation of Jesus Christ" (Matthew 1:1) or the "Book of Psalms" (Luke 20:42). Βιβλίον, is a diminutive of βίβλος, meaning "little book" or "scroll". Over time, it became the standard word for "book" in general, losing much of its "smallness" nuance in everyday speech. It is used for legal documents, such as a "bill of divorce" (Matthew 19:7), or for specific scrolls, like the one Jesus unrolled in the synagogue (Luke 4:17). Βιβλιδάριον is a double-diminutive, literally meaning an "extra-small book" or a "booklet". This term is rare and specifically emphasizes the small size of the object. It appears famously in Revelation 10:2, describing a "little scroll" held by an angel, distinguishing it from larger prophetic books.

2. Gregory of Nazianzus, Orationes 38.12 and 45.8.

3. Evagrius Ponticus, Gnostica 36.

4. Gregory of Nazianzus and Evagrius Ponticus were influential 4th-century Christian thinkers who had a significant teacher-student relationship in Constantinople, where Evagrius served Gregory as a deacon, deeply absorbing his theology, especially concerning the mind, soul, and spiritual struggles, influencing Evagrius's own ascetic and mystical writings on prayer, demons, and the eight "evil thoughts," bridging Cappadocian theology with desert monasticism for Eastern and Western traditions.

5. Not all Oecumenius manuscripts have “the mystery of God will be fulfilled, as he declared to his servants the prophets.” As a matter of fact, it is omitted by the oldest manuscript, therefore omitted in the primary critical text.

6. While the Bible does not explicitly state the marital status of most apostles, long-standing Christian tradition and early ecclesiastical writings maintain that John the Apostle remained a virgin throughout his life. Early Church Fathers such as St. Augustine and St. Jerome frequently referred to John’s lifelong virginity. Jerome, in particular, argued that John’s "virginal purity" was the reason Jesus favored him as the "beloved disciple" and entrusted the Virgin Mary to his care at the Crucifixion. Early non-canonical "lists" of apostles, such as those found in some Christian apocrypha, explicitly categorize John and his brother James as having remained virgins, while noting that other apostles like Peter and Philip were married. A common theological argument is that Jesus chose John to look after Mary because they shared the same state of virginity.

7. See his comments on Rev. 10:2

CHAPTER 11

Revelation 11:1-2 ***And I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and it was said to me, "Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it. But exclude the outer court of the temple; do not measure***

it, because it has been given to the Gentiles, and they will trample the holy city for forty-two months."

In the visions that had come before[1], the apparition revealed to the divine John the multitude of saints accompanying Christ and the divine throne they beheld, among whom those from the nations far outnumbered those from Israel. But now, another vision shows him how many, or rather how few, were esteemed in the time of the Old Covenant, and how many in the era of the New.

And see how cleverly this is depicted to him. He is *given a measuring rod* to *measure the temple of God and the altar* within the temple, clearly referring to the one in Jerusalem, *and those who worship* there. And he measured; for those who were counted were few, as in the times of old, who had found favor with God.

And he says that *the outer court of the temple* was cast out and should not be measured, because it was *given to the Gentiles*. Having measured *the temple and the altar* and those who were sacrificing within it, he heard that the court should be cast out to the outside and made wider, but not to be measured, as it was considered to have a superior measure.

He says that *the court* is *given to the Gentiles*, and it is held both within the temple and outside of it; and the New Covenant is held in place of the Old. For what is contained in it is fulfilled spiritually and truly in a shadowy manner, and it is different from the old one, according to the words of Jeremiah: “Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day I took hold of their hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt.” (Jer. 31:31-32)

He therefore speaks of the new covenant as *the court of the temple*. Then, the vision subtly implies that the Lord of the Old Covenant

has also been established, the one who in the New Covenant has appeared as Christ and Ruler[2] [ἀρχή], just as it seems to Paul when speaking about Israel, "for they drank from a spiritual rock that followed them; and that rock was Christ." (1 Cor. 10:4)

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON 1 CORINTHAINS 10:4
"From a spiritual following rock." The stone was obviously perceptible, the one from which water gushed forth for the Israelites, but it did not gush by its own nature; rather by the power of the spiritual rock present to it in operation, and following the need of the thirsty ones, that is, converting and transforming everything for their salvation and benefit, and being conjoined to their will; and sometimes fixing the water for them as if to let stones cross, at other times causing the heaven to bestow abundant food and nourishment on them, and at other times stopping up the rock into springs of waters. Therefore it would be reasonable to say ***"to drink from a spiritual rock."*** For this was the one that opened the perceptible springs into waters. But who was that spiritual rock, he says, that accompanied all these things, and according to each occasion's need changed and transformed the natures of things? Who? he says, namely ***Christ***, who even now shows to us similar and greater things. "Following" may be taken differently. For the intelligible rock, that is Christ, not only wondrously authenticated to them the things spoken, but also thereafter followed and was said to be doing things similar to these and greater, benefiting the Israelite, and also now following us the faithful. So that by continuity of the same providence, and of the same Lord and God, the miracles and benefactions of the Old Testament and those of the New are one. "From the spiritual." Since he said the drink was spiritual, it was not something altered like the manna, but was ordinary water; and therefore, from the manner of its rising up he makes it spiritual. For the rock did not give it forth by its own nature. If that were so, it would have had to give forth before, but another rock operates the whole thing spiritually, which, he says, was Christ. "Following." The "following" denotes the Spirit ever present with Christ, and working all miracles.

He called the New one *the court* of the old; for the court is the beginning and entrance of God, but not the *temple*. Therefore, he did not measure the court through which both it and those within it are revealed; for both the New one and those who have succeeded within it extend beyond the limit, the former due to their countless multitude, and the latter because of the elusiveness and height of the doctrines.

That it is said to have *been given to the Gentiles*, it was indeed also given to Israel the new blessings; but since those among the Gentiles were superior in number to the distinguished ones from Israel, it demonstrated that the whole was from the greater number, saying that the court *was given to the Gentiles*.

And he says that *they will trample the holy city for forty-two months*, the city (not the temple), calling the church a *city*, concerning which it has been said with glory about you: the city of God (Ps. 86:3), the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb. 12:22), the mother of the firstborn (Ps. 86:5), whose names are written in heaven. (Heb. 12:23)

What then does the measure of the *forty-two months* signify? It clearly indicates that the time of the new order on earth will be brief, and that the end will soon come. The number *forty*, composed of four tens, is not perfect, nor is the number *two*. From this, the argument shows that the new state will not endure long in the present life; therefore, the Scripture calls the final hour, and again the eleventh hour (Matt. 20:6, 9.), the time of the new era, during which the Only-Begotten came into the world; and in the future, it will be eternal.

To say that those from *the Gentiles will trample the holy city*, that is, the church, means that those dwelling within it will be persecuted.

Revelation 11:3-6 ***And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophecy for one thousand two hundred sixty days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the***[3] ***two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth. And if anyone wishes to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies; and if anyone wishes to harm them, he must be killed in***

this manner. They have the authority to shut the sky so that no rain falls during the days of their prophecy, and they have authority over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they desire.

Since everything concerning the Lord's incarnation and administration was revealed to the evangelist in the vision, namely, the birth, the temptation, the teachings, the taunts against Him, as well as the cross, the resurrection, the second coming, and in addition the retributions for both the saints and sinners; what pertains to the forerunners of His second coming was omitted. Now, however, these matters are being taught again, as if by way of correction, that Elijah the Tishbite will indeed come, as the divine Scripture clearly foretells. Malachi states, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the Tishbite before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, who will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse." (Mal. 4:4-5) Furthermore, the Lord, speaking to Matthew concerning John the Baptist, says, "If you are willing to accept it, this is Elijah who is to come." (Matt. 11:14) Regarding another forerunner, we have heard nothing clearly anywhere, except that concerning Enoch, Genesis states that "he pleased God and was taken away." (Gen. 5:22) The wise Apostle, speaking of him, affirms "by faith, Enoch was taken away so that he would not see death, and he was not found because God had taken him." (Heb. 11:5)[4]

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS 11:5
"By faith, Enoch." From him, the abolition of death was prefigured. Indeed, through Abel, the approval of the sentence was shown, but through Enoch, it is abolition. Enoch believed that God is a rewarder of those who seek Him; therefore, he was also pleasing to God: and to such an extent was his faith that what seemed contrary also appeared. For Abel, although he had pleased God, was slain, and God did not wish to overlook his death; therefore, Enoch was pleasing to God only by faith, believing in the reward of the good. For the sake of faith, therefore, he was pleasing, and because he was pleasing, he was

taken away. ***"he would not see death,"*** For he was indeed removed, and still lives: moreover, where and how, it is uncertain.

An ancient tradition persists in the Church: after Elijah the Tishbite, Enoch will also come, preceding the second coming of Christ and proclaiming the imminent appearance of the Antichrist. It is said that they will come first and serve as forerunners, testifying in advance that the signs performed by the Antichrist are deceptive and that one should not believe the deceiver. Regarding these matters, the vision now speaks:

that *they will prophecy for* a certain number of *days* or reveal some secret number or the entirety of what is to come. It is said that they will do this while *clothed in sackcloth*. For they will mourn over the disobedience of the people at that time.

These, he says, *are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the Lord of the* whole *earth*. Zechariah, the inspired prophet, saw a lampstand with seven lamps above it and two olive branches, but the branches stood beside two golden oil dispensers, therefore saying: “What are these two olive branches on the sides of the two golden oil dispensers?” And he heard from the angel who was speaking that “they are the two sons of oil, who stand before the Lord of all the earth.” (Zech. 4:11-14) And that from this the prophet’s use of the articles in the phrase “*these are the two olive trees and the two lampstands*” is confirmed; for this serves to indicate an agreed upon symbolism, except that here Zechariah called them “two dispensers” John called them “*two lampstands*.” That the two branches of the *olive tree*, one from the Jews and the other from the Gentiles, have been interpreted as the two peoples is not unknown to the saints. Nevertheless, it is also possible that the two prophets mentioned in the current discourse are meant.

And he says that those who wish to wrong them are defended by fire going forth from their mouths, and *they have the authority to shut the sky so that no rain falls during the days of their prophecy*. This is among the most probable; for if one of them had such authority, Elijah the Tishbite, even before completing the ministry of Christ, how unlikely would it be for him to precede Christ?

And he says *they have authority over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they desire*. For "the presence" of the Antichrist will be revealed "in the power of Satan through all kinds of signs and false wonders," as Paul writes in his second letter to the Thessalonians (2 Thess. 2:9), and these signs were intended to lead to assent and belief. Therefore, the two prophets who speak about him say that he is a deceiver and a fraud, and that he will use various signs to draw those who hear him into belief.

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON 2 THESSALONIANS 2:9
He said, The Lord will abolish the coming of the Antichrist to himself, whose coming will be according to the operation of Satan. For through his action the Devil will work all things. **"*with all power and signs*."** He foretold this, so that those present then would not be deceived. "He will show all power," he says. But of falsehood, either because he will act only according to illusion and so will deceive the eyes; or because they lead to falsehood. Or in every matter that can deceive and harm those who believe. Or, as has been said, he will make signs solely for imagination and appearance.

Revelation 11:7-10 ***And when they have finished their testimony, the beast ascending from the abyss will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies will lie in the public square of the great city, which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. And people from all peoples, tribes, languages, and nations will look at their dead bodies. And they will not allow their bodies to be laid in a***

tomb. Moreover, those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and celebrate, and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets had tormented those who live on the earth.

And when they have finished their testimony, for they will testify that the one present is not the Christ, but rather a deceiver, a fraud, and destructive. But the Son of God, who must also be believed as Savior and God and as the benefactor of mankind, will come, a coming long foretold and now occurring.

And *the beast,* he says that it is ascending *from the abyss*. The term "*beast*" [θηρίον] is used to describe the Antichrist[5] due to his brutal, inhuman, and bloodthirsty nature; whereas "*abyss*" [ἄβυσσος] refers to the life of humans, which is bitter because of sins, salty, and unstable owing to the influence of the spirits of evil.

Therefore, *the beast will kill* the two witnesses, and their *bodies* will be left unburied in the streets of Jerusalem. For in that *city*, he will reign as king over the Jews, and having deceived them, he will exercise authority over all who serve and obey him, just as the Lord says to John: "I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him." (Jn. 5:43)

Jerusalem, however, *is spiritually called Sodom*, not in a literal sense, because of the recklessness and heresy present at that time, *and Egypt*, as a place betraying and wronging the servants of Christ; just as Egypt did to Israel; where also he says that the Lord of these two witnesses was crucified.

And seeing that those deceived by the Antichrist *from every tribe* witness the destruction of the martyrs, they will rejoice over them as if their king has been victorious.

Moreover, it is necessary to *send gifts to one another* as a sign of joy and gladness.

For, as the two prophets say, *tormented those who live on the earth*, no physical torment, however; rather, by mocking their sins, exposing them, and uncovering their deceit, they will torment them intellectually.

> **Revelation 11:11-14** ***And after three and a half days, breaths of life from God entered them, and they stood upon their feet, and great fear fell upon those who saw them; and they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies watched them. And at that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; and seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest, being afraid, gave glory to the God of heaven. Woe, the second has passed; behold, the third woe is coming quickly.***

Since all things are clearly evident and destined to occur perceptibly at that time, it is excessive to dwell on what has been acknowledged.

> **Revelation 11:15-19** ***And the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of God and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever." And the twenty-four elders, who sit before God on their thrones, fell upon their faces and worshiped God, saying: "We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and begun to reign. The nations were angry, and your wrath***

has come, and the time for the nations to be judged, and to give the reward to your servants the prophets and to the saints and to those who fear your name, both small and great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth." Then the temple of God in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple; and there were flashes of lightning, voices, thunder, an earthquake, and great hail.

As a detour, the vision recounts the matters concerning the two witnesses, who are identified as prophets, and elaborates on all that pertains to them, focusing on their origin and where they have come from. They have come forth from the holy restitution of the future, and that the number of those from the nations surpasses that of Israel, and that those who have pleased God in the New Covenant exceed those in the Old.

And it states that when *the seventh angel sounded* his trumpet, *voices* were heard *in heaven* proclaiming that *the kingdom* of the *world has become the kingdom of God and of His Christ*. God always reigns, and He neither began nor will cease to reign over heaven and earth and all things visible and invisible within them, but He is the Ruler and Lord of all things without beginning and without end. Since men also became kings on earth, God had a certain way of sharing kingship with them; but when the earthly kingdom of men is dissolved at the end of the present age, only God will reign. Therefore, it has been said that *the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of God and of His Christ*, with the men who ruled on earth and the tyrannical demons having been destroyed and ceased.

When this voice arose, *the elders worshiped God*, also offering their own thanksgiving, saying, "*We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was*." The phrase "*who is*" is properly attributed to the Holy Trinity, and "*who was*," although primarily

said concerning the Father, is also applied to the Son, for the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit all exist eternally. Thus, the term "*who was*" is rightly spoken of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the thanksgiving of the elders is dedicated to the Holy Trinity.

That you say *you have taken your great power* and your kingdom from those on earth, and that you alone now reign; but concerning the earthly kingdom that is perishing, it is understandable that *the nations* became *angry*, as their dominion was overthrown, referring to the orders of both the demons and the unbelieving men.

And your wrath has come, he says, *and the time of the nations has been judged, and the reward has been given to your servants, the prophets, and the saints*. He says that you have long been patient with them, since they did not reject your goodness; now, that is, on the day of judgment, you have brought forth your wrath against them. And the things owed and appointed to the nations have also come and are present. What then? This was the judgment and the giving of retribution to the saints who had suffered wrongfully under them, and the destruction by the recompense of punishment of those who corrupted the earth, as if they had defiled it with their own sins.

And he says that *the temple of God in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple*. He says that after these things were spoken, hidden blessings and, in addition, certain new mysteries were revealed to the saints; for this is the opening of the Ark of the Covenant. For he indicates that good things are hidden in the coming age, concealed from present human beings, as he says, “what no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor has entered into the heart of man,” which God has prepared for those who love Him.” (1 Cor. 2:9) And again, that there is some mystery and a different knowledge unknown to those now living,

the Lord reveals by saying, “I will not drink again from the fruit of this vine until that day when I drink it new with you in the kingdom of my Father.” (Matt. 26:29; Mark 14:25; Luke 22:18)

The saints were deemed worthy of these things, but to the sinners there came *flashes of lightning, voices, thunder, earthquakes, and great hail*, which constitute the third woe, the future punishments known to us for the impious, and the word alludes to the signs from God.

Translator’s notes for chapter 11.

1. See comments on Rev. 7:9

2. “appeared as Christ and Ruler” [ἀρχή]. This can also be translated as “appeared as Christ and Beginning”. ἀρχή in Ancient Greek means beginning, origin, first, principle, and also ruler, authority, power, or empire, reflecting a concept of the starting point that establishes order. It can refer to the start of time (like John 1:1), the source of something, or a position of leadership, as seen in spiritual or political contexts.

3. The oldest manuscript of Oecumenius 146 (Messina 99) omits “*the two olive trees and*”. The critical texts of Hoskier and Groote both go with the oldest manuscript reading. Manuscripts 203 (Salonika Blat. 53) and 240 (Athos 770) both have it. Considering that Oecumenius uses that part below in his comments hints that it is the correct reading.

4. Oecumenius, in his commentary on that passage in Hebrews says, “”’he would not see death,’ For he was indeed removed, and still lives: moreover, where and how, it is uncertain.”

5. “The term "beast" [θηρίον] is used to describe the Antichrist.” This would mean that Oecumenius understands this beast as the “the beast that came out of the earth”, that is, the False Prophet from Revelation chapter 13. Oecumenius is clear about this elsewhere in his commentary, but in a couple of places he is a bit obscure with the identity of the three figures. The three figures are the Dragon (Rev. 12), the beast coming out of the sea (Rev. 13:1), and the beast coming out of the earth (Rev. 13:11). According to Oecumenius, the Dragon is Satan. The Beast coming out of the sea is a fallen angel or demon that is second in command behind

Satan. And Oecumenius understands the False Prophet as the Antichrist. Most commonly, it has been understood by many interpreters as the second Beast who comes out of the sea as the Antichrist, and that the False Prophet being another figure who is united with the Antichrist. Oecumenius has a unique interpretation here.

CHAPTER 12

Revelation 12:1-2 ***And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon*** [σελήνη] ***under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; and she was pregnant, and crying out in labor pains and anguish to give birth.***

Regarding the Antichrist, the vision that is more complete wishes to be recorded for us, of which a brief mention has been made in the preceding texts[1]. However, since the resurrection of this figure and his appointment by Satan as a pretext for the Incarnation of the Lord have occurred, having taken possession of and subjected the world, the Antichrist will be raised for this very reason. He will then attempt to lead the world away from Christ and persuade it to defect to Satan through apostasy. Furthermore, since the beginning of the Lord's Incarnation was marked by His conception and birth in the flesh, the vision, leading to a certain order and sequence regarding the matters it is about to recount, has made the inception of the narrative start from Christ's conception in the flesh and has depicted the Mother of God[2] [θεοτόκον] for us.

For what does it say, and *a sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet*? It is said to refer to the mother of our Savior, as has been stated. It is reasonable that the vision is described as being *in heaven* and not on earth, as a pure soul and body, like an angel[3] [ισάγγελον], as a

citizen of heaven, as one who rests with God in heaven. For he says "heaven is my throne," (Isa. 66:1) having contained and incarnated it, and having nothing in common with the earth and the evils in it, but entirely lofty, entirely worthy of heaven, even if it belonged to our human nature and essence [οὐσίας]. For the Virgin is of the same essence [ὁμοούσιος] with us; for the impious doctrine of Eutyches[4], which also makes the Virgin of a different essence from us, along with his other doctrines, which are mere opinions, may be banished far from the sacred courts of the divine.

What does it mean to say that she is *clothed with the sun, and the moon is under her feet*? The divine prophet Habakkuk, prophesying about the Lord, says that "the sun rose and the moon stood still in its order to bring forth light," (Hab. 3:10-11) calling Christ our Savior "the Sun of Righteousness[5]." (Mal. 4:2), or at least referring to the evangelical proclamation.

Where it is said that, having been exalted and increased, *the moon*, that is, the Law of Moses, stood still and no longer received any addition; for no longer, after the appearance of Christ, did it receive converts[6] [προσηλύτους] from the Gentiles as before, but rather it endured removal and reduction. Therefore, do not think here to consider the holy Virgin as the sun of the intellect; for in this manner the prophet calls the Lord concerning Israel, saying, "Fire has fallen upon them, and they did not see the sun." (Ps. 58:8) But *the moon*, that is, the ritual according to the Law and the institution according to the Law, having been brought low and greatly diminished, is underfoot, defeated by the brightness of the Gospel. And rightly the one in the law called *the moon*, since it too is illuminated by the sun, that is, Christ, just as the visible moon is illuminated by the visible sun.

But regarding what is being indicated, it would have been more appropriate to say that *the woman was* not *clothed with the sun*, but that the woman clothed the Sun contained in her womb; yet,

to show also in the vision that the Lord, who was being carried by the natural mother and is the Lord of all creation, was a protection, he said that He clothed the woman. The divine angel also said to the holy Virgin: "The Spirit of the Lord will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you." (Luke 1:35) For to overshadow, to cover, and to envelop are the same in power.

And upon her head, it says, *a crown of twelve stars*. For the virgin is crowned by the twelve apostles preaching Christ together with her.

And it says *she was pregnant, and crying out in labor pains and anguish to give birth*; and Isaiah speaks about her before she begins to labor and before the pains of childbirth come, saying she escaped and gave birth to a male child (Isa. 66:7). Gregory, in the thirteenth discourse of his Commentary on the Song of Songs[7] concerning the Lord, says that her pregnancy remains without intercourse, and her delivery is without defilement. The birth was painless. Therefore if, according to such a great prophet and teacher of the church, the Virgin escaped the pain of labor, how then does she *cry out in labor* and *give birth* while being in *anguish* here? The statement is not a contradiction, far from it; for nothing could be contrary to the one and the same speaker addressing both sides. Rather, what is expressed here cries out and is troubled as you might understand. Until the divine angel spoke to Joseph about her, saying that the one conceived is from the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:20), the Virgin was understandably distressed, having blushed[8] [ἐρυθριῶσα] toward the one betrothed, and she was considering whether perhaps he might suspect her of secret unions causing her labor pains. Her distress and sorrow, he called, according to the laws of allegory[9], *crying out and anguish*, which is not surprising.

For even the divine Moses, when he was spiritually encountering God and feeling disheartened, saw Israel in the wilderness

surrounded by sea and enemies. It is said by God, "Why do you cry out to me?" (Ex. 14:15) Likewise, now the vision declares a cry concerning the sorrowful disposition in the mind and heart of the Virgin. But you, who are the pure servant and mother according to the flesh, of my Lady[10], the holy Mother of God [θεοτόκου], having relieved your distress through your ineffable birth, also relieve my sins; for glory belongs to you forever. Amen.

[Seventh Discourse]

Having completed in part the contemplation concerning the common Lady, the holy ever-virgin and Mother of God Mary, he presents to us another, saying:

> **Revelation 12:3-6** ***And another sign appeared in heaven. And behold, a great fiery Dragon appeared, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon its heads were seven crowns. Its tail swept down a third of the stars in the sky and cast them to the earth. The Dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child, it might devour him. She gave birth to a male child who is destined to shepherd all the nations with an iron rod; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne. The woman fled into the wilderness, where God had prepared a place for her, so that there she might be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.***

As in the beginning of the vision considered authoritative, it is said that the vision, wishing to narrate more fully the matters concerning the Antichrist, begins with the conception and birth of the Lord, for whose sake that destroyer, the common enemy and adversary of all, is projected so that he might again enslave those gathered by the Lord. Similarly, it must now be said that the vision, desiring to recount the events concerning the Antichrist,

makes another beginning prior to the previously mentioned start of the Lord's birth, one that precedes it, namely, the origin according to Satan, how he was cast down from heaven. Even in the subsequent vision this is stated more clearly, adding that he also plotted against the Lord, so that, as if a certain foundation had been laid at the beginning, the remaining narratives concerning the Antichrist and the deeds done by him might be built upon it. With these matters therefore previously explained, we must now turn to the examination of the words themselves.

And it is said that *another sign appeared in heaven*, as if the narrative were striking down the original evil, Satan, because although heavenly, he has become wicked through pride; he is shown in the heavens so that the rebel might see from what heights he has fallen to what depths.

And behold, he says*, a great fiery Dragon*. The *Dragon* is called Satan because of its crookedness; for this is how Isaiah also refers to him, calling the "the dragon, the crooked serpent." (Isa. 27:1) It is described as *fiery* because of its bloodthirsty and wrathful nature.

Having seven heads and ten horns, and upon its heads were seven crowns. Nor did the prophet fail to recognize him as many-headed; therefore he says to God: "You have crushed the heads of the dragon; you have given him as food to the peoples of the Ethiopians."(Ps.74:14) They say he is many-headed, with most of the *seven heads* signifying, as has often been said, the many authorities and cunning schemes he employs against humans, through which he enslaves them, for the *crown* is a symbol of tyranny.

The *ten horns* symbolize his greatest power. For the number *ten* is perfect, and the *horn* is a sign of strength. It has also been said that "my horn will be raised like that of a unicorn." (Ps. 92:10)

As it is possible, one may come to know the one who appears in the book of Job.

And it is said that by his *tail* he drags *a third of the stars of the sky and casts them* down *to* the *earth*. For he conspired with himself to withdraw the greatest portion of the angels, persuading and causing those heavenly beings to become earthly, and darkness to overshadow the bright ones like *stars*. The *tail*, however, reveals the nature of his final and backward failings; for previously, having perceived folly and rebellion himself, and having sufficiently nurtured this in his proud mind, he therefore came to corrupt the rest as well.

And he said that *the Dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth, he might devour* her child. From the events concerning the Lord, it was carefully observed that the One who would break his dominion would be born, and the Dragon vigilantly awaited that when the Virgin gave birth, the newborn would perish. Therefore, he was not indifferent, but incited Herod to destroy the male child, who was both strong and brave; one who had no softness nor feminine qualities. For before the child could call a father or mother, Isaiah proclaims to us that "he will take the power of Damascus and the spoils of Samaria against the king of Assyria." (Isa. 8:4)

And who is this one born, the male, reveal to us more clearly, O John, who says he will *shepherd all the nations with an iron rod*? You have plainly told us, O divine one, that our Savior and Lord is Jesus Christ; for it has been promised to him by the Father that "he shall ask from me, and I will give you the nations as your inheritance, and the ends of the earth as your possession; you will shepherd them with an iron rod, and like a potter's vessel, you will break them." (Ps. 2:8-9)

And it is said that *her child was caught up to God and to His throne*. The venomous Dragon plotted, and he persuaded Herod to

destroy the children in Bethlehem, so that he might find the Lord among them. But by the providence of the Father, the child escaped the plot; for Joseph heard a divine warning to take the child and his mother and flee into Egypt, because Herod was about to seek the child's life. (Matt. 2:13-23)[11]

And *the woman fled into the wilderness, where God had prepared a place for her, so that there she might be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days*. Therefore, was the child saved from the Dragon's plot, while the woman was given over to destruction? Not only that, but she herself was also saved by fleeing into Egypt, which was a deserted place and free from Herod's plotting. And there she is said to have lived and wandered *for one thousand two hundred and sixty days*, which amount to about three and a half years, with a few days less. For it was probably this length of time that the Mother of God spent in Egypt, until the death of Herod, after which an angel's message again led them back to Judea.

> **Revelation 12:7-9** ***And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the Dragon. And the Dragon and his angels fought back. But they were not strong enough, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. The great Dragon was hurled down, that ancient serpent called the Devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.***

Just as in a recapitulation of the aforementioned principle, it conceives an earlier principle, which was partly mentioned before, concerning the vision that is about to relate to us the events regarding the Antichrist; for the first principle among them is the fall of Satan from heaven. About this, the Lord also says, "I saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning." (Luke 18:10)

What then he says, *And there was war in heaven*? The divine Scripture states that Satan rebelled against God, that is, he was stubborn and proud enough to raise his neck defiantly, and to contemplate apostasy. But God, being naturally good and patient, endured him; however, the divine angels, not bearing the arrogance of their master, expelled him from their company.

It is now said that *Michael*, one of the great archangels among the angels, *fought against* Satan and those under him. But Satan did not prevail in the war against him; nor was *there found a place* of refuge or even a dwelling for him in heaven, and he was cast *down to the earth*, either suffering this visibly, or because having been deprived of his angelic and heavenly rank, he was cast down to an earthly mindset. Then, just as one defending himself, he blames God for his downfall, since it was not possible for him to harm God himself, he harms God's servants, the people, and tries to deceive and turn them away from God, thinking that by doing this he is harming the same Master.

> **Revelation 12:10-12** ***And I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ have come, because the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them before our God day and night. And they have overcome him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives even unto death. Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and those who dwell in them! Woe to the earth and the sea, because the Devil has come down to you with great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time."***

Therefore, the holy angels, revealing their own joy which they had at the overthrow of Satan, sing a victory hymn to God, saying just now: "*Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God*,

and the authority of His Christ, for He is Almighty; for by His cooperation we have overcome the enemy.

And the accuser of our brothers, *who accuses them before our God day and night*, has departed from us. O the self-restraint of the holy angels; how they are imitators of their own Master. They call men their *brothers*.

And why is this wonderful? Even the common master did not contempt to call them this; "I will proclaim your name to my brothers; in the midst of the church, I will praise you." (Heb. 2:12; Ps. 21:23) But what do they say about Satan? He has departed. He was stripped of his rank. No longer is there room for him to stand before God and accuse men. And they say that they resisted him on equal terms, having overcome the one who seemed invincible, as if daring even against God. They triumphed by employing a collaborator and helper in the precious blood of Christ, and by the word of the testimony given for Him, which they preferred over their own lives. Having therefore prevailed, all the angels of God rejoice, having been freed from the bitter region of Satan.

Woe, he says, *to the earth and the sea, because the Devil has come down to you with great wrath, knowing that he has little time*. And if the descent of Satan were harmful to the earth and the sea, who would say why he came down? For to those who are sober and have hope in God, it has not only resulted in no harm but also in benefit, training them like a trainer[12] [παιδοτρίβης] and making them more tested through trials, tempering them as iron is tempered. But he harms the sluggish and lazy, who perhaps even without the frustration of the one stirring them up, were by nature evil toward themselves, changing their passions.

And they *say woe to the earth and the sea*; they do not mean this, but woe to those who inhabit the earth and sail the sea among men, but to those who are of the earth and dust according to what is written (see Gen. 18:27), and who have earthly minds[13] (see Rom.

8:7). Moreover, to those who are fickle, wavering, and unstable in their understanding. For against these, the common enemy wages war and enslaves the weak, those who are willing, bowing to his tyranny.

He says that he knows *that he has little time*. For the time from the fall of the Devil until his judgment and repayment to the eternal ages is indeed short.

For this reason, even Jacob the patriarch, although he lived one hundred and thirty years, said when asking Pharaoh, "The days of the years of my life have been few and evil." (Gen. 47:9)

> **Revelation 12:13-17** ***And when the Dragon saw that it had been cast into the earth, it pursued the woman who had borne the male child. And the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle, so that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time, times, and half a time, away from the presence of the serpent. And the serpent cast water like a river out of his mouth behind the woman, to sweep her away with the flood. But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the Dragon had spewed out of his mouth. Then the Dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring, those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.***

The present passage is a repetition of what has been said before; for it does not mean that immediately after the Dragon saw that he had been cast down to the earth, he pursued the woman, but rather that when the Dragon saw himself existing in such evils, and that he had fallen from angelic dignity, he became exceedingly bitter against humanity, and pursued the woman who had borne the

Savior of mankind, in order to destroy her. He pursued the woman because he recognized that the one born of her was mightier than he who had been captured, being envious of mankind's salvation through the Lord, and not accepting such a great reversal, that although he himself was cast down from heaven, men from the earth would ascend to heaven through virtue.

And it was said that *the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle, so that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time, times, and half a time, away from the presence of the serpent*. But the woman did not come under the power of Satan; rather, she fled *into the wilderness*. This, according to the earlier statements (see comments on 12:6), is Egypt. The prophet sought wings like those of a dove, so that, having flown, he might rest in the wilderness (Ps. 54:7-8); but to the all-pure Virgin are given stronger wings, those *of the great eagle*, he says. He says that the *wings* of an *eagle* symbolize the divine visitation of an angel, who urged Joseph to take the child and his mother and flee into Egypt, through whose visitation, as if by the wings of an eagle, they reached Egypt. (see Matt. 2:13-23) Having failed in this plot, which he had devised through Herod, the Dragon attempts another against the Virgin, aiming to destroy her son. Subsequently, he narrates the crucifixion and death of the Lord.

And the serpent is said to have *cast water out of his mouth behind the woman like a river*, to make her carry the river-borne burden; the divine Scripture allegorizes the temptation as *a river*, saying that through Jonah he "cast me into the depths of the heart of the sea, and rivers surrounded me" (Jonah 2:3); and through the Lord it says: "the rain came down; the rivers were present; the winds came; yet they did not overthrow the house founded on the rock." (Matt. 7:25) He therefore calls the trial upon the suffering of the Lord *a river*. Through this, he says, the Virgin is to be drowned;

and indeed, the attack reached him and the extreme of sorrow, so that the Dragon was able to fulfill his intention.

What does Simeon say to her? "And a sword will pierce your own soul also, so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed." (Luke 2:35)

But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the Dragon had spewed out of his mouth against the woman. The *earth swallowing* the *river* signifies that the temptation was accepted within her, that is, the Lord was put to death. But the Dragon was not helped by this; rather, in restoring the Lord again, He came to life after three days, having conquered death, since it was not possible for death to hold Him (see Acts 2:24), who is "the author of life," according to the divine Peter. (Acts 3:15)

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON ACTS 3:15
And by saying ***"the author of life"*** he shows that Christ himself raised himself. He does not confirm the resurrection by the testimonies of prophets, but because he was deemed trustworthy by them, by the company of the apostles. Having first exposed the offense and greatly distressed them, he then relaxes and urges them toward repentance, since the offense arose from ignorance and folly, and because what had been ordained from the beginning and foretold by the word of the prophets could not have been nullified. And when he had advanced this far, he already plainly compels them to embrace repentance, for the wiping away of sins, and for the enjoyment and partaking of the inexhaustible goods bestowed through repentance and good works.

So that the composition might be so, and the *earth helped the woman*, it must be read completely; then, as if from a question, in what way did it help? It *swallowed the river*, that is, having received the Lord who was plotted against within itself, it gave Him back again, and in this it helped. Therefore, since the Dragon also failed in the second plot, what then does he do to the anointed sons and brothers of the Lord, that is, to the faithful?

For he says that they were persecuted because they were the *offspring* of *the woman*; for the faithful are sons and brothers of the Lord according to the Scripture: " I will proclaim your name to my brothers," (Ps. 22:22; Heb. 2:12) and again, "Here I am, and the children God has given me." (Isa. 8:18; Heb. 2:13)

So then, did he also *make war against the offspring* of their own mother, pursuing and plotting against them, killing through the tyrants and rulers of the land, since they testified that the One born of the Virgin was God?

Translator's notes for chapter 12.

1. See comments on Revelation 11:7-10

2. The term θεοτόκον (Theotokos) is the central title for the Virgin Mary in the Orthodox Church and means "the one who gave birth to God." The term was officially established by the Third Ecumenical Council in Ephesus in 431 AD. This title affirms that Christ is both fully God and fully human. The Virgin Mary did not give birth to a mere human but to the Incarnate Word of God.

3. The term ἰσάγγελον (from ísos + ángelos, meaning "equal" + "angel") is used in ecclesiastical literature and theology to describe a state in which a person attains such a degree of holiness that their way of life resembles that of angels. The word derives from the words of Christ in the Gospel (Luke 20:36), where He states that in the resurrection the righteous "can no longer die, for they are like angels (isángeloi)." The isángelos state does not imply a transformation of human nature into that of angels, but rather: Liberation from passions and earthly attachments. Unceasing praise and devotion to the worship of God, just as the angelic hosts do. Incorruptibility, foretaste of the state that the righteous will experience after the general resurrection.

4. The claim that Eutyches presented the Virgin Mary as having a different "essence" from us is one of the central theological accusations against him in the 5th century. According to church history and the decisions of the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon (451 AD), Eutyches argued that after the union of the divine and human natures in Christ, the human nature was absorbed by the divine "like a drop of honey or vinegar in the

ocean." As a result, Christ had only one nature (Monophysitism), which was divine. According to orthodox criticism, this position led to the conclusion that Christ was not "homoousios" (of the same essence) with humans. If Christ's flesh was not truly human, then the Virgin Mary (from whom He received it) was considered by Eutyches to be a being not belonging to the common human nature. The Council of Chalcedon condemned Eutyches, declaring that Christ is "homoousios with the Father according to divinity and homoousios with us according to humanity." The Church emphasized that the Theotokos (God-bearer) is truly human so that Christ could save human nature by fully assuming it from her. Eutyches' position was deemed dangerous because if the Virgin Mary and Christ were of a different essence from us, then the salvation of the human race would be impossible, as God would not have truly united with human nature.

5. Perhaps Oecumenius mistakenly credited the Malachi quote to have come from Habakuk. The phrase in Greek is a little confusing (ἥλιον λέγων τῆς δικαιοσύνης τὸν σωτῆρα ἡμῶν Χριστόν).

6. The term προσηλύτους (accusative plural of proselyte) refers to individuals who have converted to a new religion or doctrine, originating from a different religious or cultural background. Derived from the verb προσέρχομαι (pros-erchomai) (πρός + ἔρχομαι), meaning "one who has come near" or "newcomer."

7. Gregory of Nyssa, Homily on the Song of Songs 13. Gregory says, "Christ alone entered this life by a new form of birth. Nature did not cooperate in this birth but served it. Therefore, the bride says that her spouse is "white and ruddy." That is, he dwells in this present life through flesh and blood while having been begotten from virginal purity. His conception is virginal. His birth is undefiled and without pangs. His bridal chamber is the power of the Most High overshadowing the virgin like a cloud. He is a nuptial torch of the Holy Spirit's splendor. His bed is free from passion, and his marriage is incorruptibility. The bridegroom born under such circumstances as these is rightly called "chosen from myriads." He was free from birth resulting from marriage, for his existence does not come from marriage. No terminology pertaining to human birth can rightly pertain to Christ's incorruptible, painless birth because virginity and childbirth cannot apply to the bridegroom at the same time. As the Son is given to us without a father, the child is thus begotten without birth."

8. having blushed [ἐρυθριῶσα]. In Greek, ἐρυθριῶσα means "blushing" or "turning red." It describes someone (specifically a woman, due to the

feminine form) whose face is turning red because of emotions like shyness, shame, modesty, or passion. In ancient texts and novels, the word is often used to characterize a heroine's emotional state or physical beauty. For example, it appears in the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) in the Additions to Esther (D 15 or 5:1), describing Queen Esther as "blushing in the perfection of her beauty" (ἐρυθριῶσα ἀκμῇ κάλλους αὐτῆς).

9. “to the laws of allegory” [τῆς τροπῆς νόμους].

10. In Greek, δεσποίνης (despóinis) is a noun meaning "mistress," "lady of the house," or "queen."

11. Matthew 2:13-23 *13And after they were departed, behold an angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph, saying: Arise, and take the child and his mother, and fly into Egypt: and be there until I shall tell thee. For it will come to pass that Herod will seek the child to destroy him. 14Who arose, and took the child and his mother by night, and retired into Egypt: and he was there until the death of Herod: 15That it might be fulfilled which the Lord spoke by the prophet, saying: Out of Egypt have I called my son. 16Then Herod perceiving that he was deluded by the wise men, was exceeding angry; and sending killed all the men children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the borders thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men. 17Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremias the prophet, saying: 18A voice in Rama was heard, lamentation and great mourning; Rachel bewailing her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not. 19But when Herod was dead, behold an angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph in Egypt, 20Saying: Arise, and take the child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel. For they are dead that sought the life of the child. 21Who arose, and took the child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. 22But hearing that Archelaus reigned in Judea in the room of Herod his father, he was afraid to go thither: and being warned in sleep retired into the quarters of Galilee. 23And coming he dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was said by prophets: That he shall be called a Nazarene*.

12. “trainer” Παιδοτρίβης refers to a physical or gymnastic trainer in Ancient Greece who specialized in instructing youths.

13. Also see Plato Axiochus dialogue 365 E. The reference in Plato, Axiochus 365e, to a mind focused on "earthly" or worldly concerns aligns conceptually with the "carnal mind" or "mind set on the flesh" described

in Romans 8:7 of the Bible. Both texts describe a state of mind that is oriented towards the material world and consequently opposed to a higher, spiritual reality or the divine will.

CHAPTER 13

Revelation 13:1-4 ***And I stood upon the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads; and upon his horns ten crowns; and upon his heads the names of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion. And the Dragon gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority. And one of his heads as it were wounded unto death; and his deadly wound was healed. And the whole earth was astonished at the beast, and they worshiped the Dragon, because he had given authority to the beast.***

In the vision before this, the prophetic evangelist saw a sign in heaven, and behold he says a red Dragon (Rev. 12:3). Now he tells us he saw coming up *out of the sea a beast like a leopard*. Then in the vision that follows he again sees another beast rising out of the earth (Rev. 13:11), having two horns like a lamb. So, therefore, he saw three beasts in all: the first in heaven, the second *out of the sea*, and the third out of the earth. But the first and the third are apparent to all; for the first is the ancient evil Dragon, the apostate and adversary of God the Almighty, Satan, and the third is the Antichrist. This middle beast, which now lies before us for observation, what is it? I think it comes after the apostate Dragon, Satan, and it holds the leading position among the rest of the demons; for many fell together. And it is clear from that passage that the divine Scripture declares the ruler of all the demons has

been bound to the sea and to Tartarus[1], as was shown above (Rev. 9:14); perhaps metaphorically thus naming the commotion and disturbance that accompany them, indicating from what things and to where they have fallen, and that they are reserved for the judgment of the great day according to what is written (Jude 6).

For if this were not so, but it was perceptible in *the sea* and in Tartarus, how is it that before this it is recorded in the account that, having devised many schemes, he acted against the Lord and against his mother? Except that according to the literal historical sense[2], which must not be disregarded even itself, he has been assigned to Tartarus and the abyss.

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON 2 PETER 2:4
"God did not spare the angels who sinned." He attacks those who were first cut off and says: If the angels who were in honor with God because of the immortality of their substance, when they had shaken off the yoke, sinned, they did not obtain forgiveness: much less will God spare men who cling to their own creation if they have sinned, ***"But chains of gloomy."*** This signifies the inevitability of condemnation. For with such chains, we certainly punish those condemned by us. But someone may say: Whence is such condemnation of the demons evident? From the demons themselves, for they plead in the Gospel (Luke 8:31) not to be cast into the abyss, as if all others might also suffer this. It must be understood, however, that although the argument is presented in a hypothetical manner, it is not truly so; for it has nothing else to respond to later, but is proposed only in appearance, while in truth it is a simple persuasive example: and for this reason, it will be said: for if it were as it seems, it would proceed thus: If angels, having sinned, were not spared, nor the ancient world, nor Sodom and Gomorrah, would He spare these? Certainly not; or even in this way: He will not spare them at all. However, He does not rashly approach those who are more distinguished; but wishing to show that these, while they sin, are more liable to punishment.

This *beast*, then, is the second one. The one now before us has been introduced in the book of Job, engaging in dialogue with God, accusing Job, subjecting him to countless trials, yet saying that he has "walked before the face of heaven." (Job 1:7) And not only does the book of Job record him, but the Lord has made

mention of him to John when addressing the Jews: "You are of your father the Devil, and you desire to do the desires of your father." (Jn. 8:44) That one was a murderer from the beginning, and in the truth he did not stand, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own, for he is a liar and the father of it, the one who is now presented to us for viewing, the apostate Dragon, become their leader and ringleader of the revolt; just as the holy Abraham is proclaimed father of nations, having been made beforehand the source of their faith according to what was said to him, "I have made you the father of many nations." (Gen. 17:5) With these matters therefore clarified according to my view, let us return to the passage in question.

He says, *I saw a beast rising out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns ten crowns*. He sees him coming up from the sea; for his rise and, as it were, his elevation are from the disturbed and unstable life of men, who have chosen him as their tyrant; and the *ten horns* plainly indicate to him a great dominion, just as the *seven heads* signify certain ploys and principles of deceit and constructions; for the numbers *ten* and *seven* are perfect numbers[3].

And there were *crowns* about his *horns*, showing him as ruler risen up against mankind, because we through deceit had voluntarily delivered ourselves to him.

And *upon his head* he says *names of blasphemy*. Properly said, *upon his head*; for he raves to himself and, as his own head, mocking God, stealing reverence from God and assigning it to himself.

And *the beast*, he says, *which I saw was like a leopard*, and because of its swift-moving feet, I think, and quick for deceits.

And his feet, he says, are like those *of a bear*, somewhat weak and patient so as even to walk under heaven to plot against men.

And his mouth, he says, is like *the mouth of a lion*; "Your adversary the Devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour," according to what is written[4]. (1 Peter 5:8)

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON 1 PETER 5:8
For the Devil does not cease, Peter says, ***prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour;*** to whom you also resist with firm strength of mind. Concerning such sharp snares and the precise deceit of him against us, the holy Justin Martyr also brings forth the case, stating that the Devil did not clearly know the power of his punishment before the coming of the Lord, when the divine prophets had announced it mysteriously: just as Isaiah (14:4), under the persona of the Assyrian, tragically narrates the entire representation of the Devil. But when the Lord had come and had openly said that the eternal fire is reserved and prepared for the Devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41), upon hearing this, he does not cease to lie in wait for the faithful, wanting to have many companions in his defection, lest he be ashamed to cling to this alone, applauding himself with this cold and envious consolation. *[Fragments of St. Justin Martyr, 4]*

And the Dragon is said to have given *him his power*. Now the power of that apostate Dragon lies in these deceits and guiles, and he himself became their author and teacher.

And I see, he says, *one of his heads as if it were wounded unto death; and his deadly wound was healed*. This meaning might have been known to the Spirit-bearing evangelist himself; but as it appears to me, he indicates something of this sort: for the deadly blow which was inflicted upon the Devil that was struck against one of the heads through the devotion of Israel, was healed through their subsequent idolatry.

And the whole earth, he says, *was astonished at the beast*. For how could not even the God-fearing nation of Israel have bowed down to it? And this is what was spoken by Isaiah before God concerning Israel: "for your sake my name is continually blasphemed among the nations," (Isa. 52:5) yet they also worshipped together with the prime evil one the Dragon, the cause of so great deceit and treacherous devices, in homage to the beast.

<u>Revelation 13:4-8</u> ***And they worshiped the beast; saying[5], "Who is like the beast, and who can make war against him?" And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemy, and power was given unto him to continue for forty-two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of heaven of the sealed[6] from the foundation of the world.***

From whom Israel's fame was routed; those who were seized by him weave praises to him, saying, "*Who is like the beast, and who can make war against him*?" He says that all have been defeated and fallen under his feet, *and there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemy*. Was it given by someone? It was given by those deceived and having worshiped him; for to boast arrogantly is pride. For what is greater than this? To say, "I will ascend into heaven; I will set my throne above the stars of heaven." (Isa. 14:13) And just a little after that, he says, "I will be like the Most High," (Isa. 14:14) as Isaiah mocks him, for these are indeed blasphemies against God.

And it is said that *power was given unto him to continue for forty-two months*. In previous comments, *the forty-two months* we understood it as a brief time[7]. For all time is brief, even if it seems to be very long, when compared to the unending ages.

He says, *and he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven*. It is said that the blasphemies against God are of the apostate. By the *tabernacle* of God he means the holy angels because God dwells in them. For if it has been said concerning

men, "I will dwell in them and walk among them," (2 Cor 6:16; see Lev. 26:11) what would one say about the heavenly powers, that God has them as a dwelling?

And power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him. As I said earlier that he has taken the authority from the men who willingly bend themselves to his destructive power. Rightly did he say that all those *that dwell upon the earth shall worship him*; for apart from the God-fearing Israel, which did not bear this, every remaining race of men and tribe has been found worshipping the destroyer.

Of whom it says *whose names are not written in the book of life of heaven of the sealed from the foundation of the world*; the vision very securely predetermined this; for since it has been said that all the inhabitants of the inhabited world have worshiped the apostate Devil, there were nevertheless a few who were pure from this worship, both from the Gentiles and from Israel, such as Job, his four friends, Melchizedek, and the holy prophets of Israel, and those who are testified to in the Old Testament for godliness.

He says all have worshipped him, except these who, because of their godliness, and the precision and purity of their citizenship, are written in heaven, and are guarded by God; for this is signified by the *sealing of the book*. Concerning this *book* the Lord says to his holy disciples according to the divinely inspired Luke: “nevertheless in this do not rejoice, that the spirits are subject to you; but rejoice that your names were written in heaven.” (Luke 10:20)

<u>Revelation 13:9-10</u> ***If anyone has an ear, let him hear. If anyone [leads others] into captivity, into captivity***[8] ***he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he***

must be killed. Here is the endurance and the faith of the saints.

If anyone, he says, has a mind able to comprehend the things said, *let him hear* the things said and know that the one ready to take others captive will be taken captive by the beast and will voluntarily defect to it; for receiving no assistance from God, he will be carried off to utter evil. If anyone prepared for murders, he will die the spiritual death in the worship of the Devil. Therefore, he says, *is the endurance and the faith of the saints*. Therefore one becomes innocent of the slavery to the evil one, from which slavery may we all be shown to be free by the grace of the God who called us to the knowledge of Him. To Him be glory to the ages, amen.

[Eighth Discourse]

Having made many digressions and having returned from the later principles to the earlier principles, he arrived at the matter under discussion. And that was to narrate to us the things concerning the wicked and God-hated Antichrist. This one therefore is now set forth in the midst, and see what he says about him.

<u>Revelation 13:11-13</u> ***And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and it had two horns like a lamb, and it spoke like a Dragon. And it exercised all the authority of the first beast before it. And it made the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And it performed great signs, so that it even made fire come down from heaven to the earth in the sight of men.***

And I saw, he says, *another beast coming up out of the earth*, from where also is the beginning of origin for all men. For the Antichrist is a man, "whose presence is according to the working of the Devil," (2 Thess. 2:9) as it seems to the most wise Paul.

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON 2 THESSALONIANS 2:9
He said, The Lord will abolish the coming of the Antichrist to himself, whose coming will be according to the operation of Satan. For through his action the Devil will work all things. ***"with all power and signs."*** He foretold this, so that those present then would not be deceived. "He will show all power," he says. But of falsehood, either because he will act only according to illusion and so will deceive the eyes; or because they lead to falsehood. Or in every matter that can deceive and harm those who believe. Or, as has been said, he will make signs solely for imagination and appearance.

And it had two horns like a lamb, and it spoke like a Dragon. He said reasonably that he does not have the horns of a lamb, but that he is *like a lamb*, and that he is not a Dragon, but speaks like a Dragon. For since the true one is thought to be Christ, it is not that he was given *horns like a lamb*. And since through every sort of wickedness he contends equally with the Devil, yet he is not the Devil, he did not say that he is a Dragon, but that he speaks as a dragon. Since therefore these things are so, the Word preserved for him the image also in the vision, and gives him a form not of a lamb, but *like a lamb*, neither of a dragon, but *like a dragon*. For Christ has been called a lamb, the Devil a Dragon, but it was neither this nor that.

And it says that he e*xercises all the authority of the first beast* in his presence. That is, he becomes the successor of the power of the Devil, and prepares all to worship him, *whose deadly wound was healed*. This has been said among the preceding. Now it must only be marked. For since he said that he has *all the authority of the first beast* before him, and first of all he named the Dragon the fiery one, whom the vision shown in heaven revealed, so that no one might think to say now that he received the authority as that

of the first beast, I am not speaking about that first of all of all, but of him who comes after that one, yet before the Antichrist, whom the vision showed rising from the sea like a leopard (Rev. 13:1-2). For the wound of this one's death was healed, as stated above.

And it performed great signs, so that it even made fire come down from heaven to the earth in the sight of men. And the doing of signs and wonders by the power of the Devil is attested by the apostle; for after saying where "the presence is by the operation of Satan, he brings upon all power and signs and lying wonders." (2 Thess. 2:9)

> **Revelation 13:11-13** ***And deceives those who dwell on the earth by the signs that were given it to perform in the presence of the beast, saying those who dwell on the earth to make an image for the beast who***[9] ***had the wound of the sword and lived. And it was given it to give breath to the image of the beast, [that the image of the beast might even speak and make as many as do not worship the image of the beast]***[10] ***be killed. And it makes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free and the slaves, to give them a mark [on their right hand or on their forehead, and that no one be able to buy or sell except the one having the mark,]***[10] ***the name of the beast or the number of its name. Here is wisdom. The one having understanding, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man; and its number is six hundred sixty-six.***

And deceives, it says, *those who dwell upon the earth by the signs*. For he makes signs indeed, but by charming the eyes of those who see, just as the magicians also did before Pharaoh[11]; for they were directed by one and the same deceiving demon, both those and this one. And it says well that he makes the *signs in the presence of the*

beast. For since he will erect *an image* for it, which he will also force all to *worship*, he will perform the signs supposedly by it, as deifying the *image*, because indeed from it he has the power to do these things.

And it says *it was given to* him *to give breath to the image*. For they say that many of the idols both sweat and seem to *speak* by diabolical power.

And it says that the Antichrist also gives a *mark* and seal of his own *name*, without *which no one will either buy or* indeed *sell*.

Here it says *is wisdom*: *let him calculate the number of the beast* and through the calculation let him find it. For I will not say, it says, a foreign and unusual calculation, nor one named with concealment and doubling, but a calculation well-worn and known to men, which sums to the *number six hundred sixty-six*. This number also signifies many other proper and common names, and it also signifies these: as principal names Lampetis[12] [Λαμπέτις], Benedictus [Βενέδικτος], Titan [Τιτάν]. For Titan is written with the letter iota, and in some cases it is written as a diphthong[13].

For if Teitan [Τειτάν] is from teísis [τείσεως - tension], and the verb is teinō [τείνω], and the future tense will be tenô [τενῶ], it is reasonable to write it with a diphthong, as phteírō [φθείρω] from phthérō [φθερῶ], and speírō [σπείρω] from sperō [σπερῶ]. By form of address, however, the Victor [ὁ νικητής], for perhaps he so named himself, from whom the three horns, that is, having waged war against the kings, he will uproot. See what Daniel says about these things in his eighth vision: "He says that attention was paid to its horns, that is, of the fourth beast; and behold, another little horn came up among them, and three of the horns that were before it were uprooted from its presence; and behold, eyes like the eyes of a man were in that horn, and a mouth speaking great things." (Dan. 7:8)

Then the unstable one[14] [ὁ ἐπίσαλος], a wicked guide [κακὸς ὁδηγός], truly harmful [ἀληθὴς βλαβερός], ancient slanderer [πάλαι βάσκανος], an unjust lamb [ἀμνὸς ἄδικος]; for perhaps by these names he would be called by those opposing him. But he will not only not be ashamed to be called these things, he will also take pleasure in such labels, so as not to be embarrassed to call himself accordingly. Stitching such wicked and God-hating choices together, the wise apostle says: "whose glory is in their shame." (Philip. 3:19) Therefore, with many names having been found, the authority to attach the more fitting one rests with the one who wills it to the accursed one.

Translator's notes for chapter 13.

1. Oecumenius says in his commentary on Jude 6, "Those who had indeed received the honor of angelic position, since they did not remain in their origin, but corrupted the gift given to them from the goodness of celestial life, were reserved and kept for judgment or condemnation on the day of great and intolerable punishment. For this also now signifies kept. According to what Christ said: "Who is prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matt. 25:41) And Oecumenius, in his commentary on 2 Peter 2:4 says, "*But chains of gloomy*." This signifies the inevitability of condemnation. For with such chains, we certainly punish those condemned by us. But someone may say: Whence is such condemnation of the demons evident? From the demons themselves, for they plead in the Gospel (Luke 8:31) not to be cast into the abyss, as if all others might also suffer this."

2. The Greek phrase κατὰ τὸ γράμμα τῆς ἱστορίας translates to "according to the letter of history" or "according to the literal historical sense." In classical and ecclesiastical contexts, it refers to an interpretation that focuses on the factual, literal, and chronological sequence of events as they are written, rather than seeking deeper symbolic or allegorical meanings.

3. "for the numbers ten and seven are perfect numbers." This specific phrasing is highly characteristic of Philo of Alexandria (c. 20 BC– 50AD), a Jewish philosopher who blended Greek philosophy with biblical exegesis. Philo frequently argued that numbers like 7 and 10 were

"perfect" to explain the divine order of the Torah and the creation of the world. This statement also reflects Pythagorean and Middle Platonic number symbolism rather than modern mathematics. In the ancient world, "perfection" (teleios) referred to completeness, cosmic order, or mystical properties rather than just the mathematical definition of a perfect number (a number equal to the sum of its divisors, like 6 or 28). The Pythagoreans considered 10 the most sacred and "perfect" number because it represents the Tetractys (1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 10). It was seen as the number of the universe, encompassing all arithmetic and geometric proportions. Seven was viewed as perfect because it "unites" the spiritual and material worlds—often described as the sum of 3 (the triangle/spirit) and 4 (the square/matter). In ancient thought, it was also linked to the seven visible planets and the seven days of creation.

4. Oecumenius, in his commentary on 1 Peter 5:8 says, “For the Devil does not cease, Peter says, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour; to whom you also resist with firm strength of mind. Concerning such sharp snares and the precise deceit of him against us, the holy Justin Martyr *(Fragments of Justin Martyr, 4)* also brings forth the case, stating that the Devil did not clearly know the power of his punishment before the coming of the Lord, when the divine prophets had announced it mysteriously: just as Isaiah (14:4), under the persona of the Assyrian, tragically narrates the entire representation of the Devil. But when the Lord had come and had openly said that the eternal fire is reserved and prepared for the Devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41), upon hearing this, he does not cease to lie in wait for the faithful, wanting to have many companions in his defection, lest he be ashamed to cling to this alone, applauding himself with this cold and envious consolation.

5. The oldest Oecumenius manuscript 146 (Messina 99) omits, “saying, ‘who is like the beast?’” 203 (Salonika Blat. 53) and 240 (Athos 770) has that section, therefore I added it in because that is obvious the correct reading.

6. “*are not written in the book of life of heaven of the sealed from the foundation of the world*.” Some Revelation manuscripts read, “*is not written in the book of the life of heaven of him who was slain before the foundation of the world*.”

7. Oecumenius said in his comments on Rev. 11:2: What then does the measure of the *forty-two months* signify? It clearly indicates that the time of the new order on earth will be brief, and that the end will soon come. The number *forty*, composed of four tens, is not perfect, nor is the number

two. From this, the argument shows that the new state will not endure long in the present life; therefore, the Scripture calls the final hour, and again the eleventh hour (Matt. 20:6, 9.), the time of the new era, during which the Only-Begotten came into the world; and in the future, it will be eternal.

8. In the Oecumenius manuscripts, the second “into captivity” is omitted, and literally reads “If anyone [leads others] into captivity, he goes.” Oecumenius probably had the original reading found in the Scripture text written by John because he does appear to support it in his comments, saying “to take others captive will be taken captive”.

9. In the oldest Oecumenius manuscript it reads, “image for the beast, as it has the wound of the sword and lived.” It has the conjunction ὡς, not the correct pronoun ὅς. Other Oecumenius manuscripts have the correct reading, which is the one that I chose to use here.

10. The oldest Oecumenius manuscript omits two small sections of the Scripture text, but other Oecumenius manuscripts has the full correct readings, which I placed in brackets.

11. That phrase describes the actions of the Egyptian magicians in the Book of Exodus 7-8, who used their "secret arts" or "enchantments" (like conjuring, illusions, or sorcery) to imitate the signs and wonders performed by Moses and Aaron before Pharaoh, trying to match God's power but ultimately failing, as their feats were limited compared to divine miracles, particularly after the first few plagues, showing God's supremacy.

12. The name Lampetis [Λαμπέτις] constitutes one of the historical attempts to interpret the number 666 of the Revelation, as recorded by Irenaeus of Lyons in his work “Against Heresies”. The word is the feminine form of the adjective lampetis and means “the shining one”, “the radiant” or “the luminous one”. In the literature of the 2nd century, the term is used rarely to describe the dawn (ἀώς). Irenaeus mentions “Lampetis” as one of the names whose numerical value of the letters (isopsephy) equals exactly 666: Λ (30) + α (1) + μ (40) + π (80) + ε (5) + τ (300) + ι (10) + ς (200) = 666.

13. In Greek, a diphthong (from di- "twice" and phthongos "sound") is a combination of two vowels pronounced together in a single syllable. The pronunciation of these combinations has evolved significantly from Ancient to Modern Greek. Combinations of short vowels with ι or υ (e.g., αι, ει, οι, αυ, ευ, ου, υι).

14. The term ὁ ἐπίσαλος is an adjective in the ancient Greek language that is used mainly metaphorically to describe the state of uncertainty and instability.

CHAPTER 14

Revelation 14:1-5 ***And I saw, and behold, the lamb standing on mount Zion, and with him one hundred and forty-four thousand having the name of his Father written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven like the voice of many waters and like the voice of loud thunder, and the voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps. And they sing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. And no one was able to learn the song except the hundred forty-four thousand who had been redeemed from the earth. These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins; these are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, a first fruits to God and to the Lamb, and in their mouth no lie was found. They are blameless.***

The Lord is recorded in the Gospels as addressing the lawless among the Jews with the words: "Behold, your house is left to you desolate." (Matt. 23:38) For they were no longer worthy of divine visitation after the madness at the cross. How then does the Lord now appear from the vision standing on Mount Zion, as if from remorse? That the city of theirs and the temple and the whole people were left deserted, the Romans clearly showed, having burned the temple, set the cities on fire, laid waste all their land and sold even their mother-city[1] [μητρόπολιν] into slavery. But now to show the Lord as having ascended to *Mount Zion* is to show the ultimate return of Israel through faith, and that the Lord

will dwell among them and receive them. For this is what was proclaimed through Isaiah: "'The Savior will come to Zion, and he will turn ungodliness away from Jacob,' says the Lord." (Isa. 59:20-21) The prophet and the apostle agree with Isaiah; the one sings, "For you shall make them turn their back in your latter end, you will prepare their face," (Ps. 21:12) and the one writes, "when the full number of the Gentiles has come in, then all Israel will be saved." (Rom. 11:25-26)

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON ROMANS 11:25-26
But when, he says, you suppose nothing great or marvelous about yourselves, mistakenly believing that you are wiser than others, learn briefly a most dreadful mystery, revealing the deep providence of God concerning all, which made evident the Israelites—except for the election (for he says, "in part")—they being hardened and their salvation being put aside; God transferred this to you. Yet after all of you have been grafted in, grace will again encompass them all. For this very thing is attested by the Scriptural oracle of Isaiah. ***"Partly."*** Not entirely, he says. For there were also innumerable Jews who believed, and who were about to believe. ***"The fullness of the Gentiles."*** By "the fullness of the Gentiles" he means all those from the Gentiles who are about to believe. So when, then, all shall have entered into faith, then also Israel, having believed, will be saved. And by Israel he means those who have remained within Judaism. "That you will place them, he says, on the back and among the remnants, that is, among the survivors, you will prepare their face." And thus all Israel will be saved; instead of "the majority," that is, he will turn them away from sins and will turn them back to himself. "He will come forth from Zion." Isaiah again introduces with a cry that he who is able to save will come forth from Zion, and will cleanse the sins of the Israelites. And when will these things be? When I shall take away their sins. This is the covenant, as it were a sign, when I shall make worthy of the forgiveness through baptism. Therefore, since I have not yet obtained this (for they have been hardened), this will happen later. ***"And this to them."*** so that no one of those already entrusted might think that the Scripture is fitting only for the Jews, he cites a sign by which it is shown that the prophecy is yet to come. Which is this? ***"When I take away their sins."*** If, then, it has not yet been taken away, the Scripture is to come. Therefore, he adduces (for God's gifts are irrevocable): "When I take away." Then, he says, God's promise will be fulfilled.

He says, *and with him one hundred and forty-four thousand having the name of his Father written on their foreheads*. Previously he called the *one hundred and forty-four thousand* the twelve thousand believers from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. (see Rev. 7:4-8) Does he then also now speak about these? I do not think so; for neither did he name them with the article [the/αi], for he did not say "the one hundred forty-four thousands," but only "one hundred forty-four thousands"; nor does he testify that they have also kept their virginity. For virginity was not held in special esteem among Israel, as later it was neglected among the Gentiles; so that those here named must be considered as mixed from both Israel and the Gentiles, and in fact mostly from the Gentiles.

But to have *the name of* the *Father* and of his Son *written* indicates that they are endowed with some divine glory.

And I heard, he says, *a voice like harpists singing a new song before the throne and the living creatures and the elders*. The music pleasing to God and harmony of the song is indicated by the sound going forth as of those playing the harp; for if praise is not beautiful in the mouth of a sinner according to what is written (Sir. 15:9), certainly it is beautiful and melodious in the mouth of the righteous.

And, he says, *no one was able to learn the song except the hundred forty-four thousand who had been redeemed from the earth*. But I suppose that no one could hear the mysteries of the new song except those who were deemed worthy to sing them; for knowledge is to each according to the proportion of purity; for the Lord says many dwelling places[2], namely rewards of good things, from my Father. (Jn. 14:2)

He says they were *redeemed* by the blood of Christ. For the precious blood of Christ has been poured out for all people, yet for some in vain, those who, though able to attain salvation from here, voluntarily deprived themselves of it, of whom the Lord,

reproving them through the prophet, says, “What profit is there in my blood in my going down into corruption?” (Ps. 30:9) But concerning those who have been saved and justified, of whom these are the *first fruits* and the first installment, about whom the present discourse is, and very profitably, and to such a degree as no one could say how great.

These are, he says, *the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins; these are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were purchased from among men, a first fruits to God and to the Lamb, and in their mouth no lie was found. They are blameless*, as the discourse of contemplation testifies to those who are in Christ, being far superior to and beyond the human nature.

> **<u>Revelation 14:6-7</u>** ***And I saw another angel flying in mid-heaven, having the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on the earth and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people, saying with a loud voice: Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth and sea and springs of waters*.**

The brilliant and lofty *mid-heaven* is by nature an emblem of the glorious *angel*. But he possessed an *eternal gospel*; for from eternity the lesson is salvation: to fear the Lord, since “the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom,” (Prov. 1:7) and love is the end (see 1 Tim. 1:5). Yet he says the cruel and soul-destroying beast, the Antichrist, must not be feared, even if he threatens and acts more harshly.

He says, *because the hour of his judgment has come*, he will render justice unlike anything even he who terrifies those on earth has done.

And worship him who made, he says, the one who made all creation, and not the deceitful and God-hating Devil.

Revelation 14:8 ***And another angel followed, saying, "Babylon the great has fallen, she who made all the nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."***

I suppose *Babylon* to mean the confusion of present life and the vain temptation; for Babylon is interpreted as confusion and the frenzy of idolaters. And it is made majestic by names, called by them enthusiasm[3]. But if you even perceive Babylon as sensible, you would not stray from the present aim.

And *the wine*, he says, *of the wrath of her fornication*, apostasy from God according to the written word: "you have destroyed all who commit fornication from you," (Ps. 72:27) which *fornication* brings darkness to the nature of reason; for who of a sound mind would choose to worship with wood and stones, and to call the spirit away from God? About this matter was the wine spoken of, "the wine being the wrath of dragons; and the wrath of asps is incurable." (Deut. 32:33) This *Babylon* first drank of the deadly *wine* herself, and thereafter *all the nations* whom she ruled she compelled to *drink*.

Revelation 14:9-12 ***And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice: If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed undiluted in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, those who***

worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints: those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

The third angel forbids people from worshiping the *beast* and from receiving its *mark*. For to worship someone as a god other than the true and living God is most impious.

And he says that *he* will *drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed undiluted in the cup of His anger*. The glorious David also remembers this cup and the wine, saying that "a cup is in the hand of the Lord, full of wine mixed undiluted, and he inclined from it to this: but the cluster of its vintage was not emptied; all the sinners of the earth shall drink." (Ps. 74:9) He says that the wrath of God is wine, not making the metaphor from joy but from darkening and from the change by which those controlled by the wrath of God are restrained.

He says of the *mixed* thing that it is *undiluted*. That is, mixed in an undiluted way; for the wrath of God has been mixed with generosity and goodness, it has been *mixed undiluted*; for there is no equality between anger and goodness, but generosity far outweighs. For if there were equality of both the wrath of the righteous and the goodness, not every living thing would have endured. Knowing this, the prophet said, "If iniquity be observed, Lord, Lord, who will stand before you?" (Ps. 130:3) But since goodness is diverse in the cup of God beyond righteous anger, he again spoke mysteriously, saying: "Merciful is the Lord and just, and our God has mercy." (Ps. 116:5) Having arranged his justice in the middle, so that, by the surrounding compassion being constrained and not forgiven, it may work its proper effects; and this is proper to justice, to give to each according to merit. Having once remembered the *wine* and therefore called forth the *anger*, he persisted in that course and named the *cup* the portion given by

the hand of God to sinners. But someone may perhaps say, how do you call the mercy of God many in that judgment at the time when the vision delivered to us, having descended a little, declared that the punishments of those being punished are eternal?

For what does he say? *And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night*. To whom would one say this? “Is it, O man, to be tormented eternally and not suffer according to due merit?” For what? If someone is worthy of fire and darkness, and is condemned into darkness, and is punished merely in this, by not being in participation of God’s goods, and is pained only by that, and not punished sensibly. But he says that *the smoke of torment that ascends* is the anguish of sinners, poured out below in weeping to the outside.

Therefore, he says: *Here is the patience of the saints*. He says that in that time of the Antichrist, and in that temptation it is shown forth. For as great as the danger and the affliction then, so great a need of perseverance. Then the discourse is shaped as if from a question. And who, he says, are those whom you call holy and patient?

He says: *those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus*. For such people, even when trials and death are present, will set everything second to the faith and love of God.

> **Revelation 14:13** ***And I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." And the Spirit says, "That they may rest from their labors, for their works follow with them."***

Blessed are those who are not permitted to worship the image of the beast nor to receive the mark upon their forehead and their hand, and because of this are put to death; for these, having taken

up the crown of martyrdom, attain the same end as the other martyrs.

> **<u>Revelation 14:14-16</u>** ***And I saw, and behold a white cloud; and upon the head[4] there was one like unto the Son of man, having upon his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat upon the head[4], Send forth your sickle, and reap: for the time to reap is come; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat upon the cloud cast his sickle upon the earth[5].***

He sees the Lord who was worthy to become *the Son of man*, riding a *cloud*. It was truly a cloud, since the Gospel also says this, that which I have offered as demonstration above[6] is of some angelic power; or it is written, "and he mounted upon the cherubim and flew; he sped upon the wings of the wind." (Ps. 18:10) He calls the angels a *cloud*, because of the loftiness and exalted nature and worth of their being; or at least he calls the Mother of God [θεοτόκον] a cloud upon whom honor rests, and this mother according to the flesh; for so Isaiah likewise foresees her, saying, “Behold, the Lord sits upon a swift cloud, and he will come into Egypt, and the idols of Egypt shall tremble before his face.” (Isa. 19:1) Interpreting this statement, Aquila[7] says that the cloud is of light thickness; thick, as I think, because it is human and flesh, but light because it is pure and blameless and not burdened by any sin, and also because of the exalted and heaven-reaching nature of the soul. Therefore, you should understand the *cloud*; *white* because of the purity and the luminous [φωτοειδές] appearance of the things perceived.

But the *crown* signifies the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ; for Christ is King of both the spiritual and the sensible, and the *crown*

of gold, from the precious things among us, sets forth the splendor of the kingdom.

And the *sickle* shown in his hand plainly indicates that in his power he sits over the end[8] [συντέλειαν] of the age.

And the angel said to him, *Send forth your sickle, and reap: for the time to reap is come; for the harvest of the earth is ripe*. And he says he *cast his sickle upon the earth* and it was reaped? A harvest is often spoken of in the Gospels; "but the workers are few." (Matt. 9:37; Luke 10:2) There, the harvest signified the gathering of the faithful; here, it signifies the end of humanity, so that if any in them were chaff, unripe and worthy of fire, it would be delivered to the fire.

> **<u>Revelation 14:17-20</u>** ***And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the altar, who had power over fire, and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe." And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden outside of the city, and blood flowed out of the winepress even unto the bridles of the horses, by the space of a thousand six hundred stadia***[9]**.**

The *angel* who has the *sickle*, who came forth from the heavenly *temple*, is himself also a minister and servant of the coming end. being heavenly and a minister of God, having come forth from the heavenly *temple* he is described.

And another, it is said, an *angel* from the *altar who had power over fire*. And this, I understand, is appointed for the punishment of the ungodly.

Then he says, send and *gather the clusters of the vine of the earth*. Now the previously mentioned (Rev. 14:15) harvest represents the righteous and the sinners being gathered together at the same time, whose separation "the Lord's winnowing fan will make, who will thoroughly cleanse his threshing floor; and he will gather the wheat into the storehouse, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire," as is said in the Gospels. (Matt. 3:12; Luke 9:17) But the vintage of the grapes plainly signifies the very lawless ones, from their drunkenness and the madness of the vision depicting them; and it is clear from these that neither the Lord deems them worthy to be gathered as the former, but some of the angels, and they are immediately cast out into the winepress of the wrath of God, not being granted defense nor asked, nor brought to judgment, as sinners also are introduced in the Gospels (Matt. 25:46; Luke 16:19-31), for whom the inexhaustible and unshared cause has become the reason of punishment. Concerning these things I think the prophet says that "the wicked shall not be raised in judgment." (Ps. 1:5) He has appropriately called the punishment a winepress by the metaphor of grapes and the harvest.

And he says *the winepress was trodden outside of the city*; for it was not lawful that those being punished should receive the returns of evils and defile the joy of the holy ones in the heavenly Jerusalem, which has been called out, through sympathy for those rightly punished, not that a great chasm does not separate the pious from the impious according to the words of the patriarch Abraham, which he made toward the rich in the Gospels. (Luke 16:26)

And blood, it says, *flowed from the winepress*. He rightly said *blood*, to show that having spoken of a cluster of grapes he had spoken metaphorically, since indeed the sufferers and the thrashers were people, and they thresh with *the bridles of horses for a thousand six hundred stadia*, he says. Certain *horses* of God are handed over to us in the divine Scripture, signifying angelic power that holds God's dominion; for he says in the Song of Songs to the bride, "The heavenly bridegroom I likened to my horse in Pharaoh's chariot, the near one, my near one." (Song 1:9) And the prophet Habakkuk sings to God that he will "mount upon your horses, and your cavalry is salvation." (Hab. 3:8) The Revelation says that *the bridles of these horses* are wet with the *blood* of sinners, not nearby but standing apart by length; and the whole statement is figurative, the riddle showing that the blood is so great. For those who travel the broad way are far more numerous than those on the narrow and pressed path (Matt. 7:14), just as those bridles might well be soaked from the horses set over punishment, whether of angels or whatever else.

Translator's notes for chapter 14.

1. "mother-city" [μητρόπολιν] The word μητρόπολιν (metropolin) literally means "mother city", combining the Greek words "mētēr" (mother) and "polis" (city). It denotes the homeland or central city-state that founded colonies, the capital of an empire (such as Rome), or the principal city/seat of a metropolitan bishopric in ecclesiastical usage.

2. "dwelling places" [μοναί] is a Koine Greek word primarily meaning "dwelling places," "abodes," or "rooms". It is the plural form of μονή, which is derived from the verb μένω, meaning "to stay," "remain," or "abide". The King James Version translation of "mansions" comes from the Latin Vulgate's *mansiones*. In 1611, "mansion" simply meant a place to stay or a residence, not necessarily a grand, palatial estate as the word is used today. Outside of the Bible, the word was used for a "staying" or "tarrying," and sometimes referred to a stopping place or station on a journey, such as an inn.

3. “And it is made majestic by names, called by them enthusiasm [ἐνθουσιασμός].” This phrase comes from the work “On Composition" (Chapter 25) by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, an important historian and teacher of rhetoric of the 1st century BC. In this particular excerpt, the author refers to the poetic language and the power of the word, noting the following: The phrase describes how poetry acquires modesty and grandeur through the choice of appropriate words. This process of elevating speech is called by the critics of technique ἐνθουσιασμός. Dionysius argues that the arrangement and selection of names not only provide clarity, but transform writing style into something divine and impetuous, imparting to it a quality resembling divine inspiration.

4. “*and upon the head there was one like unto the Son of man*”. “upon the head [ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς]” is an obvious scribal error. The correct reading is “upon the could [ἐπὶ τῆς νεφέλης]”. I seriously doubt that Oecumenius himself made this error, and that it was probably done by copyists. Manuscripts 203 (Salonika Blat. 53) and 240 (Athos 770) read ἐπὶ τῆν κεφαλῆν.

5. “cast his sickle upon the earth.” The oldest Oecumenius manuscript omits that part, but manuscripts 203 (Salonika Blat. 53) and 240 (Athos 770) have the correct reading, which I added it in. Here, as in other places where the editor of the critical text goes with the readings from the oldest Oecumenius manuscript even when they are corrupt readings, I usually choose to follow later manuscripts that have the correct readings.

6. Oecumenius explained this in his comments on Rev. 1:7, His coming upon *the clouds of heaven*, and the Lord Himself said concerning Himself in the Gospel according to Mark as follows: "And the powers in heaven will be shaken; and then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory." (Mark 13:25-26) For as I suppose it was written concerning His ascension into heaven on the day of the Ascension in the Acts, that a cloud received Him out of their sight, so He will come again with clouds. (Acts 1:9) I suppose, metaphorically, that the divine Scripture calls the holy angels "*clouds*" because of their lightness, their lofty nature, and their ability to walk on air [ἀεροβατές], as if it were saying that the Lord will come accompanied and attended by divine angels. For therefore the prophet also introduces Him, saying, "And he mounted upon the cherubim and flew; he flew upon the wings of the wind." (Ps. 17:11)

7. Aquila of Sinope (130A.D.) was a celebrated translator of the Hebrew Bible into Greek and a significant figure in 2nd-century Jewish history. A proselyte to Judaism from Sinope in Pontus (modern-day Sinop, Turkey),

he is most famous for producing a highly literal Greek translation that sought to replace the Septuagint in Jewish communities. Aquila's version is the third column of the Hexapla, a monumental six-column parallel edition of the Old Testament compiled by the scholar Origen in the 3rd century.

8. The noun συντέλειαν is the accusative case of the word συντέλεια. In the New Testament and the Septuagint, the word is often associated with the sense of completion or the end: Refers to the end of the world or an era. Fulfillment: The full realization of a plan or a prophecy.

9. The word stadia [σταδίων] is the plural form of the word stadion [στάδιον] in the genitive case. In ancient Greece, the stadion was a unit of distance equal to 600 feet (approximately 185 meters). In the New Testament (Jn. 11:18) the distance “ἀπὸ σταδίων δεκαπέντε” (a distance of fifteen stadia) is mentioned.

CHAPTER 15

Revelation 15:1-4 ***And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God was finished. And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who had conquered the beast and his image and the number of his name, standing on the glassy sea, having the harps of God. And they sang the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb, saying: "Great and marvelous are your works, Lord God Almighty; righteous and true are your ways, O King of the nations. Who shall not fear you, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy; for all the nations shall come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed."***

He saw, he says, *seven angels having seven plagues*. Seven, he says, are the many, the ones prepared against the sinners, by which the wrath of God receives its completion.

And he *saw*, he says, *a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who had conquered the beast and his image and the number of his name, standing on the glassy sea, having the harps of God*. He says somewhere in his own words the wisest Paul: "If anyone builds upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will be tested by fire; for it will be revealed by fire." (1 Cor. 3:12-13)

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON 1 CORINTHIANS 3:12-13
For after faith there is work and building needed. But the righteous, with materials like ***gold, silver, and precious stones***, build up their own deeds through faith, whereas the sinners, their materials easily catching fire, are worthy of the fire there… Those who built with combustible material have been utterly destroyed. For all their works are lost. ***"He himself will be saved."*** Who? The one who built with gold and silver and precious stones. For having said about him that he will receive a reward, he now states what reward, that is, salvation. Yet he too will be saved as through fire, as is fitting for one passing through fire, and being cleansed of the slight defilement adhering to him. For God alone is perfectly without sin. But even those men who are most just are not completely pure. For it has been said that we all stumble greatly (James 3:2), and no one is clean from sin, not even for a single day of his life (Job 14:4-5). For it is also said to Malachi that, like fire in a furnace and like soap of launderers, God will burn and cleanse certain ones. (Mal. 3:2-3)

So then will not only the wicked, who heap upon themselves the careless burdens of sin, but also the righteous be tested by fire, even though they bring gold and the precious materials? This is what he now says: those who have conquered the beast in every way, standing on the *sea made of glass mingled with fire*, *glass* because of the brilliant and pure nature of the righteous in it, *mingled with fire* because of the smoky and purifying influence of every kind of filth, since even the righteous need purification. For we all sin in many ways according to what is written[1] (James 3:2);

"and who will be clean from defilement? But not even if his life upon the earth should be one day." (Job 14:4-5)

The *harps*, as has often been said, signify the sweet-sounding hymn of the saints *to God*.

And he says, let us sing *that song of Moses*, the one which he sang when the host of Pharaoh was drowned, "let us sing to the Lord, for he has been gloriously glorified; he cast horse and rider into the sea; he became to me a helper and a cover for salvation." (Ex. 15:1-2) And the song is a victory-song concerning the punishment of the ungodly and the victory against the Devil and the son of lawlessness, the Antichrist. And he calls the song of the Lamb that which is fitting, namely toward the Lord and toward his righteous judgment against the ungodly; therefore they admire the truth and the righteousness of the Lord.

He says that Christ is indeed *King of all nations*, but since it is said to Isaiah: "and the root of Jesse and the one who rises to rule the nations, upon him the nations shall hope," (Isa. 11:10) therefore for this reason the vision also calls him *King of the nations* and that *all the* peoples *shall come and worship* him, appropriately announcing beforehand the calling of the *nations* and their faith toward the Lord.

Revelation 15:5-16:1 ***And after these things I saw, and the temple of the tent of the testimony in heaven was opened, and seven angels came out of the temple, having seven plagues from the temple, clothed with pure bright stone[2] and tightened about the breasts with golden belts. And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who lives for ever and ever. And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power; and no***

one could enter into the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled. And I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways and pour out the seven bowls of the wrath of God upon the earth.

The tent of testimony, the tent that had been compacted in the wilderness, that tent which Bezalel the chief craftsperson of the works then made had the custom to call in the divine Scripture (see Ex. 35:30), because it was the tent of the testimonies and commandments of God. For there was the ark of the covenant. the mercy seat, the table, the altars of incense and of offerings, the lampstand (see Ex. 31:7-8), and all that God commanded the divine Moses to construct, saying, "and you shall make for me according to all that I show you on the mountain" (Ex. 25:9); and by metaphor from the ancient tent and also the heavenly temple which is what it is called, it was named the *tent of testimony*.

From there, the *seven angels*, he says, *came out*. For where else should the heavenly ministers of God be seen as coming forth but from the heavenly *temple*?

And he says they had in their hands *seven plagues which they would pour out upon the earth*. For many signs will occur on the earth in the time of the end; of these even Christ recalled in the Gospels, teaching concerning the end (Mark 13).

But that the *angels* are *clothed in a bright, pure stone* turns out to be a sign of their honor and of a nature that is pure and luminous and steadfastly inclined toward the good, if indeed they were clothed with Christ. For the Lord is called a stone by divine Scripture, as by Isaiah: "Behold, I lay in Zion a precious, chosen stone in the foundations" (Isa.28:16); and by the prophet: "The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner." (Ps. 118:22) That the stone be put on, and the wisest Paul exhorts us likewise: to "put on our" stone "Jesus Christ, and make

no provision for the desires of the flesh" (Rom. 13:14); for he who has put this on is outside all soul-destroying desires. And as for those living, their practical matters and stability are hinted at; for it has been said concerning them that, "they are mighty, doing His word with strength."

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON ROMANS 13:14
"But put on the Lord Jesus Christ." For he who has put Christ on possesses virtue in general. How is he to be clothed with him? If he were altogether ours, appearing in us both inwardly and outwardly. That the garment should never leave him, he calls a garment.

These then are the *seven angels* taken from *one of the four living creatures*, before whom there is much said, *the wrath of God in seven golden bowls*.

Golden is well said; for *the wrath of God* is honorable too, bearing good and advantage in itself rather than justice, even if those punished are made to faint.

And the temple, he says, *was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power*. The *smoke* is an emblem of divine wrath. For it is written, "smoke went up in his anger." (Ps. 18:8) The *smoke*, however, is suggestive of fire, yet also the smoke which the prophet Isaiah saw, where he says, "and the joist shook because of the voice with which the Seraphim cried out 'holy,' and the house was filled with smoke." (Isa. 6:4) He revealed the wrath of God against Jerusalem.

And the phrase *smoke from the glory of God and from his power* has a certain figurative meaning, as if one would say: "it was filled with smoke from the wrath of God," for God is *power* and *glory* itself; and who could endure his wrath?

And no one, he says, *could enter into the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled*; for who will withstand the wrath of God, or live after being subject to it?

For if no one stood in the place of the Lord, according to what is written (Jer. 23:18), then indeed he would spare not to bring down the wrath of God. And I heard, so he says, a command issuing forth, that *the seven bowls* of the divine *wrath be poured out upon the earth*.

Translator's notes for chapter 15.

1. Oecumenius, in his commentary on James 3:2 says, "That no man can lead a life without sin is confirmed by the slipperiness of the tongue. From the same, it also demonstrates that no one can attain perfection. For who is there who has not erred through his tongue? But if someone has overcome the slipperiness of his tongue, is he not suitable to govern the whole body? For he who has conquered that which is easiest to slip, could by no means be overcome by that which is much more difficult."

2. The oldest manuscript of Oecumenius reads, "stone" [λίθον]. Manuscripts 203 (Salonika Blat. 53) and 240 (Athos 770) has the reading "linen" [λῖνον]. Andrew of Caesarea, who was a contemporary of Oecumenius did acknowledge that some copies do in fact have "stone". Andrew said, dressed in "pure linen" or, as some copies have it, in a "pure stone." Oecumenius did in fact use the reading "stone" because he elaborated upon it below in his comments by referring to Christ as a "stone", and then quoting some Scripture passages to support the interpretation.

CHAPTER 16

<u>Revelation 16:2-7</u> ***And the first poured out his bowl upon the earth; and there came to pass a grievous and nasty sore upon the men that had the mark of the beast and that worshipped his image. And the second poured out his bowl upon the sea; and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living soul died in the sea. And the third poured out his bowl upon the rivers and the fountains of waters;***

and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters saying, Righteous are you, who are and who was and who is holy, because you have judged these things; for they shed the blood of saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard the altar saying, Yes, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are your judgments.

These things could be understood in two ways: either as events that will occur sensibly at the time of the end, or allegorically. For when the Lord, addressing the signs of the end to his own disciples, set forth many of the evils that were then to occur, saying "you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. And there will arise nation against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and plagues and earthquakes in places; and all these are the beginning of birth-pains, and after a little while, for then there will be a great tribulation such as has not occurred from the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will be." (Matt. 24:6-8)

If the things now said were to be interpreted as having happened when each of the seven bowls is poured out, the beginning of the suffering and the pains signified by the *sore* that arose from the *first bowl* would be the afflictions and anguishes that distress the souls of men then because of the reports of wars; and the *blood* of *the sea* and waters plainly indicate the killings of those encamped near the *waters* in land battles, as is natural.

And I heard, he says, *the angel of the waters* speaking. Almighty is God and foreseeing of His creatures and sufficient for the benefit of all, so that there is no need for any collaborator for this; for where the mere willing is the sole work accomplished and where by the impulse of the will all things have been made existent, how could there be need of one who assists and partakes in the conferring of benefits? But since God is good and desires

also to show kindness to the holy angels through assistance given to those who pray, for by aiding one who is in need one benefits not so much that other as oneself, and because there was no one among the angelic powers who was in want and in need of assistance from another, God appointed that those on earth who are in every respect needy of good should be provided for by the holy angels.

Therefore, in previous passages (see Rev. 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14) we recognized angels as the guardians of the churches, and Daniel the wisest wrote that Michael, the chief among angels, watches over the tribe of the Jews. (Dan. 12:1) And now the Revelation recounts to us an *angel* appointed over the *waters*. For the earthly creation, composed of the four elements, has the air conjoined with fire, earth, and water[1]. For some among the heavens wished to be fashioned into a fifth kind of body, which they say it is ethereal and circular in its motion; the three elements, fire and earth and air, are lavishly diffused for the purposes of respiration and other common uses[2]. That indeed fire, though the element is said to saturate the whole ether, is abundant and self-sufficient upon the earth, and dwells in its cavities and stones; and already some draw fire from waters in vessels lined with glass, whenever, when lifted up toward the sun, they become mirrors facing it.

But the earth is common to all, a mother and a tomb and a secure dwelling. Yet the water is not abundant for everyone: there is drinkable water in springs, fountains, wells and rivers, and the aerial water retained in the clouds in the heights gives us timely rain by divine command and nourishes every living thing on the earth. Since therefore *water* is not abundant for all, one of the holy *angels* has been appointed over it, so that it may be provided sufficient and adequate for the needs of those who lack it, which indeed often, through our wickedness, cuts off and causes scarcity, famines and the plagues that follow them.

Of this *angel*, appointed by God's providence over the *waters,* I heard him say*: Righteous are you, who are and who was and who are holy*. That "*who are*," then, shows the unending nature of God; and that "*who was*," the one without beginning; and He "*who is*" holy is righteous in all things through all things.

Because he says *these things you have judged*, *for they shed the blood of saints* may *drink blood*; for it is necessary that those encamped by the waters and the rivers in time of war should drink water defiled with blood from the slaying of the dying; to which an angel likewise sends up thanksgiving and those who circle the heavenly *altar*. For *I heard the altar say* this, indicating those who minister at the altar. May it be that we all, delivered from all the hardships spoken of, send up a thankful hymn to Christ, to whom be glory unto the ages. Amen.

[Ninth Discourse]

The first three bowls poured out by the three angels produced the things written. But as for the fourth and the fifth, it must be examined what they did.

Revelation 16:8-11 ***And the fourth angel says, He poured out his bowl upon the sun; and it was given to him to scorch men with fire, and men were scorched with a great heat; and they blasphemed the name of God who has authority over these plagues, and they did not repent to give him glory. And the fifth poured out his bowl upon the throne of the beast; and his kingdom became darkened, and they gnawed their tongues because of pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and they did not repent of their works.***

But these things are not difficult to explain in terms of the turns of fortune. For the scorching of *the sun* would be to people the wasting and the crowding and the destitution of those left in wars, who, oppressed by evils, ought to have asked from the Almighty God aid and deliverance from the afflictions that hold them; these men also *blasphemed* and, he says, *did not repent*. And therefore the *plagues*, so that since through the benefits of God they did not know the Master, at least through punishments they may come to recognition.

And the *bowl* of the *fifth angel* was *poured out*, he says, *upon the throne of the beast; and his kingdom became darkened*. For it is written concerning the apostle about the Antichrist, "whom the Lord will consume by the breath of His mouth," (2 Thess. 2:8) and concerning Isaiah: "Let the wicked be taken away that he may not see the glory of the Lord," (Isa. 26:10) "the glory" that calls the Lord's glorious presence.

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON 2 THESSALONIANS 2:8
"whom the Lord will consume." Then follows relief. Whom Christ, he says, will destroy. For just as, while a fire is still at a distance, small creatures are consumed by the heat, so likewise Antichrist will be consumed from the very coming of Christ and ***by the breath of his mouth***. And he calls the breath of the mouth a command and precept, and as it were a blast, or the Holy Spirit.

The previous statement that *the bowl was poured out upon the throne of the beast* indicates that the godlessness of the Antichrist will receive a tyrannical end, his ruin being wretchedly effected, and that darkness will seize all those placed under him with unexpected punishment of the accursed; for they remain in darkness of thoughts, perplexed by what has happened.

And he says that *they gnawed their tongues* because of the fire. This is accustomed to happen in every utmost distress, if indeed the tongues or some part of the body are accustomed to be taken away by the teeth, they think that it will lessen the other pain. They

too must repent, if not for any other reason, then at least because of the overthrow of the Antichrist, whom they have appointed for themselves as king and god, and because they have blasphemed the true God by the deposition of the imposter.

> **<u>Revelation 16:12-16</u>** ***And the sixth angel poured out his bowl upon the great river Euphrates; and its water was dried up, that the way might be prepared for the kings from the rising of the sun. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the Dragon and out of the mouth of the False Prophet; for they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go forth unto the kings of the whole inhabited earth, to gather them to the battle of the great day of God the Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watches and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into the place called in Hebrew Meggido*** [3]**.**

The sixth angel made the *Euphrates River* passable, perhaps drying up some of its springs so that passage by it would be easy for the *kings*. By a diabolic agency and by the permission of God, many *kings* were *gathered together* for their mutual war; for the Lord had said that wars would occur at the time of the end in the brief testimony given above (Matt. 24:6).

And he says they *came out from the mouth of the Dragon and from the mouth of the False Prophet*. The Dragon, the author of evil, he calls the Devil, and the False Prophet is someone else acting by the power of the Devil, as if it were prophesying, or the Antichrist[4].

But if he is speaking in general of the Antichrist, whom in the earlier passages he introduced as one deprived by the Spirit of the

Lord, but now as though still living he vents demons through his mouth, let the hearer not be astonished.

For what is seen is a vision, and the first things are often shown to the evangelist later, and conversely the later things first, and he says, *I saw three spirits like frogs*. For there are *spirits of demons performing signs, which go forth unto the kings*. The *demons* are compared to *frogs* because they delight in the filthy, muddy life of men and in the slime. But the damp and windless life seems to them more like the life of sinners rather than the steadfast and hardened life of the righteous, whom they greatly envy and rejoice in the destruction of the living.

And he says that it is a kind of wonder-working[5] [θαυματοποιΐας] of the demons to bring the kings together against one another in war at the time of the end, and he calls that *day great*, that is, that season; for truly that day is called great and terrible, and also by Joel it is said, before it comes, "the great and evident day of the Lord." (Joel 3:4)

Behold, I come like a thief, says the Lord. He says "like a thief" because of the sudden and unexpected nature of his second coming.

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON 2 PETER 3:10
The uncertainty of the Lord's coming is signified as a ***theft***, when it is least expected, through the thief and the night: through the night indeed, because of uncertainty; for all things in the night are uncertain: through the thief; because he is not expected; for no one will be robbed who expects a thief, but those who least expect him will be robbed. Therefore, the Lord also says that just as in the days of Noah there were men rejoicing in weddings and drinking, thinking nothing of the future calamity that would overtake them (Matt. 24:38), until the flood overwhelmed them: so too will the coming of the Lord suddenly come upon the wicked.

Blessed is he that watches and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked. He persevered in the way of the thief; therefore he said that

the *garments* must be kept so that they are not lost, garments meaning the virtuous and modest life by which we are deemed worthy of God's protection, that is, the body so that it may be holy and clean. For he who has not guarded it will be shamed before the angels and the humans of the divine throne, being pursued in the judgment at that time and left *naked*, deprived of divine assistance.

And the demons, he says, *gathered the kings of the whole inhabited earth into the place called in Hebrew Meggido*. This is interpreted as "Cutting off" or "to be cut off." Therefore he called the place of war *Meggido* from the cutting off and slaughter destined to be gathered there.

> **Revelation 16:17-21** ***And the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came forth from the temple from the throne saying, "It is done"; and there were flashes of lightning and voices and thunders, and there was a great earthquake, such as had not occurred since men were upon the earth, so great an earthquake, and the great city was [divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and the great city Babylon was][6] remembered before God to give her the cup of the wine of the wrath of God; and every island fled away and no mountains were found. And great hail, about the weight of talents, fell from heaven upon men; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, for the plague of it was exceedingly great.***

Into the air indeed he *poured out his bowl*; and the *voice* said *It is done*. What has been done? The decree, that is, of God and His plan.

When this was spoken, *there were flashes of lightning and voices*: the *flashes* from the heights, the *voices* on the earth from the awe of the flashes.

And thunders and an earthquake. Either he calls an *earthquake* the shaking of the earth, since this too is contained among the signs of the end (Luke 21:11), or he calls an *earthquake* the transformation of things seen, according to what is said to the Haggai: "once more I will shake not only the heaven but also the earth and the sea and the dry land, and I will shake all the nations." (Hag. 2:6-7) Therefore it is also emphasized, as he says, that there had never been such an earthquake like it before.

And he says *the great city was divided into three parts*, *and the cities of the nations fell*. Concerning Jerusalem he says *the great city*, and it is clear from what he contrasts with it *the cities of the nations*; for in the divine Scripture, it is customary to call Israel, apart from the other peoples, a nation. And he calls it *great*, as infamous.

And all the cities fell; for when the land was being transformed and made new, how could the cities standing in it remain untouched, defiled by the dwelling of sinners?

And *Babylon*, he says, *the Great, was remembered before God to be given the cup of the wine of* the fury of his *wrath*. In what it said previously, And another angel followed, saying, "Babylon the great has fallen;" (Rev. 14:8) but in the present passage he wants us to understand that he does not mean that Babylon, but signifies another. And I think he means Rome and those who will then occupy it, as the discourse to follow will teach.

Therefore he says that *great Babylon was remembered before God*. That is, the memory of her former sins, when they persecuted and killed the saints, came before God; and *the cup of the wine of the*

wrath of God is already interpreted; therefore there is no need to speak at length.

And he says *that every island fled and no mountains were found*.

Islands are said to be the churches from the nations, as the prophet says: "The Lord has reigned; let the earth rejoice; let many islands be glad." (Ps. 97:1) *Islands* are also said, as those that have emerged and overcome the bitter and salty idolatry. But one might also understand islands as the impure hordes of demons, signifying something different, as being entangled in this salt and fickle life.

About the *mountains*, he says that they are demons, and the great singer, singing, shows that "the mountains melted like wax before the face of the Lord because he is coming." (Ps. 96:5) The account therefore hands down to us that the ranks of the demons at that time will be destroyed and vanish. But where could the wretched ones flee from the presence of God, "in whose hand are the ends of the earth," (Ps. 4:4) who measured the heaven by a span and the earth with a handful? (Isa. 40:12) except that those who suffer will attempt a useless flight and escape.

Because of these events and the *great hail*, it was necessary that the people then turn to pleas and prayers. For thereby the calamities upon them would cease, whereas they instead *blasphemed God*, by whose favor the evils also increased against them.

Translator's notes for chapter 16.

1. This statement describes a central tenet of Classical Element Theory, which originated in ancient Greece and served as the primary scientific framework for the physical world for nearly two millennia. Empedocles (c. 450 BCE) was the first to propose that all earthly creation is composed of four fundamental "roots": Fire, Earth, Air, and Water. He taught that these

elements are eternal and unchanging, but their various mixtures and proportions create everything in existence. Aristotle (c. 350 BCE) refined this theory by adding that elements are joined through shared qualities: Air is hot and wet. Fire is hot and dry. Water is cold and wet. Earth is cold and dry.

2. This passage draws from the cosmological works of St. Basil the Great (specifically his Hexaemeron or "Six Days of Creation"), where he critiques and adapts ancient Greek theories of the universe. It distinguishes between the "corruptible" materials used for life on Earth and the "incorruptible" substance of the heavens.

3. “Meggido” The oldest Oecumenius manuscript reads “Meggido.“ [Μαγεδδώ]. Both manuscripts 203 (Salonika Blat. 53) and 240 (Athos 770) read “Armageddon” in both the Scripture text and the comments. In this case I whose “Meggido” because Oecumenius interprets the word “Meggido” and not “Armageddon”.

4. Oecumenius stated that the False Prophet is the Antichrist in chapter 13.

5. The word θαυματοποιΐας refers to the ability or act of performing miracles. Depending on the context, its meaning varies: In religious context, the performance of supernatural acts attributed to divine intervention or to persons with particular spiritual gifts (saints, prophets). Magic tricks or wonder-working. In ancient Greece, the term also described the θαυματοποιΐας of the time, that is, magicians, tightrope walkers, or individuals who used visual tricks to impress the audience.

6. The oldest Oecumenius manuscripts omit that section in brackets, but it is in both manuscripts 203 (Salonika Blat. 53) and 240 (Athos 770), as well as in the comments.

CHAPTER 17

Revelation 17:1-5 ***And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying: Come, I***

will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication. And he carried me away in the Spirit into a desert. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns. The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, holding a golden cup in her hand, full of the abominations and the impurities of the earth's[1] fornication. And on her forehead was written a name: Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of prostitutes and of the abominations of the earth.

Having fulfilled the matters concerning the end of the present age, the vision turns to another thing, wishing to show the evangelist the matters concerning Rome. And he says, *Come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who sits on many waters* speaking of *judgment*, meaning her conduct and her society, in which she has been judged to be and how she pursues it.

And he calls her a *prostitute*, as one prostituting herself and apostatizing from God; for this too is called prostitution in divine Scripture according to what was said by the prophet to the God of all: "You have destroyed everyone that commits fornication against you.." (Ps. 72:27)

And he says there are *many waters*, over which she rules and which are governed, as he himself says.

With them he says *the kings of the earth committed fornication*. And these are the ones who reigned over them; for these are the kings of the earth who have shared in her fornication and idolatry.

And, he says, *the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication*; and indeed the rest, over whom she

was mistress, have also apostatized from God, some controlled by her, others led by her.

And, he says, *he carried me away in the Spirit into a desert*. The desert foreshadows her coming desolation.

And I saw, he says, *a woman sitting on a scarlet beast*. The *beast*, he says, is the Devil upon whom it rested, and by whom it was commanded; *scarlet* because it had been stained with the blood of the saints.

And the *beast* was *full of blasphemous names*; for the Devil, who is attributed to it, sins against God in the worship due to God.

He says it had *seven heads and ten horns*. He himself interprets these, calling the *heads* and the *horns* kings, both those who reigned in it and those who were to reign.

And *the woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, purple* for the kingdom, and *scarlet* for the shedding of the many holy bloods.

Adorned with gold and precious stone and pearls. As a queen fittingly the text says *adorned* about her, with royal adornment.

Holding a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations, golden indeed because honorable for her rulership, yet full nevertheless of idolatry and pollutions, by which she was nourished and to which she poured sacrifices to her own demons.

And he says, *the impurities of the earth's fornication*; for she attributes to it the causes of the idolatry of the other nations as well, as to the chief author of evils and of idolatrous madness.

And it is said to have been *written* also upon *her forehead*, as one says in some inscription, who she was; and that it is *Babylon*, the *mother of prostitutes*, *Babylon* because of the turmoil and confusion in her and the persecutions of the saints; for confusion, as has been said, is signified by the name of Babylon; and *mother*

of the fornication and apostasy from God. For how could she not be mother and teacher of the one who persecuted the evangelical word and those who proclaimed it, persuading the nations to adhere to the ancestral deception?

> **<u>Revelation 17:6-9</u>** ***And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. And I marveled when I saw her, a great marvel; and the angel said to me, Why do you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, that has the seven heads and the ten horns. The beast which you saw, was and is not, and is about to rise up out of the abyss, and to go into perdition. And those who dwell on the earth, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will marvel when they behold the beast that was not and yet is. Here is the mind that has wisdom.***

For the prostitute not only was full with the *blood* of the saints, but she was also *drunk*. The kings who reigned over her had such different natures; *I will tell you what the mystery of the woman and the beast is*: that is, in a mystical way these things which are written to you as in a figure are revealed through the Revelation.

"*The beast which you saw, was and is not, and is about to rise up out of the abyss*," he says. For the Devil had indeed been, before the existence of the sensible world, made by God for good works, like the other glorious angels; but it is not shown in what respect the evangelist indicates concerning the things about the end of the age, in which he will go into the fire prepared for him and his angels. For to be in these things is not properly to be. Then when his activity is about to be revealed in the last days he says: *and is about to rise up out of the abyss, and to go into perdition*.

For through the rise of the Antichrist there will be an increase to the Devil, deceiving men and persuading them to worship him as previously said in many places. Or, think not that it was and is not so; the apostle writing to the Philippians says, “to all the saints in Christ Jesus, who are in Philippi,” (Philip. 1:1) being called saints because “they are in” Christ and in a family unit relationship and remembrance of God.[3]

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON PHILIPPIANS 1:1
to all the saints in Christ Jesus. For there were also Jews calling themselves holy; but Paul addresses those who are in Christ Jesus.

If then “they are” holy, the accursed Devil “is not” now, even if he was before or was cast down by the Almighty God from his proper order. Likewise the impious, even if they appear to exist so far as subsistence and essence, are not so far as to have the election and remembrance of God; and that this is so, the book of Genesis does not record the genealogies from Cain, (see Gen. 5:1-6:1) as it says that by reason of impiety they were not, but it declares their perdition in which they are about to perish. That is, the just punishment of Gehenna against him; for the Lord says concerning those condemned in it, speaking to Matthew: "But fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna." (Matt. 10:28)

And he says that *those who dwell on the earth will marvel*. Not all, but those *whose names* are not[4] *in the book of life*. And why will they marvel? Because the *beast was and is not* and will appear and be destroyed; for those who had trusted in him will be most astonished at the change that will come upon him. For wishing to be ruler of the world and so showing himself, he will not only be deposed from his rule, but will also receive a worthy end for his wickedness.

Therefore, he says, *here is the mind that has wisdom*. Therefore, so says the mind that has been made wise: let the riddle be known how it *was and is not*, and is about to ascend from the abyss. For

even for that which departs from being into non-being, the thing that is about to ascend again from the abyss seems to be contradictory, unless someone should apprehend it in some other way, as has already been said.

> **<u>Revelation 17:9-14</u>** ***The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. and there are seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes he must remain a little while; and the beast that was and is not, himself also is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goes to destruction. and the ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive[5] authority as kings for one hour with the beast. these have one mind, and give their power and authority to the beast. These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for the Lord of lords and King of kings is he, and those who are with him are called and chosen and faithful.***

The seven heads he says *are seven mountains, on which the woman sits*. From this most clearly it is shown that what has been said refers to Rome; for it is related that she herself sits on seven mountains, and there is no other city.

And he says *there are seven kings: five have fallen, one is, another has not yet come, and when he comes he must remain a little while*. Appropriately he regards the kings as the heads; for the kings are the headship of Roman dominion. What then? He said that of all those who reigned in Rome, only seven were heads of the beast; since these seven are most of all the beast, that is, the Devil, they divided his head against the Christians, having stirred up persecutions against the Church; of whom the first is Nero, the second Domitian, then Trajan, Severus, after him Decius, Valerian, Diocletian; for these among those who reigned in Rome

especially persecuted the Church, as Eusebius says in his Chronicles[6], of whom he says five of the seven fell by death: Nero, Domitian, Trajan, Severus, Decius; and the one remaining is Valerian.

The other says *he has not yet come yet*, and that whenever he comes it is necessary that *he remain a little while*. But another names Diocletian, after whom the reign over Rome ceased and transferred into the renowned city of the pious Constantine, Constantine himself having assumed the imperial power. And everything was reported very precisely to the evangelist, especially the matters concerning Diocletian, among which it is said also "and whenever he comes it is necessary that he remain a little while," saying "to remain" in reference to the persecution against the Christians; for although he reigned twenty years, having begun the last two with the persecution, he resigned the empire.

And he says that *the beast which was, and is not*. And it *is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goes to destruction*. And he appointed the Devil first and last and a fellow counselor of the seven. For how would this one not also be a ruler who made even the seven utterly wicked?

And the ten horns which you saw, he says, *are ten kings, who have not yet received a kingdom*. Concerning these *ten kings* or *horns* the most wise prophet Daniel explained from the dominion of the Romans, saying: "they will arise in the last times, in the midst of which the Antichrist will be raised." (see Dan 7:7-12) Therefore he says they have not yet received a kingdom but will *receive authority as kings*. He calls them "as kings" because of the brief and shadowy nature of their kingdom.

Then he adds that they *receive one hour* together *with the beast*. He calls here the beast the Antichrist. For in the preceding passages he also called him accordingly, saying, "And I saw

another beast coming up out of the earth, and it had two horns like a lamb." (Rev. 13:11)

The expression that they would reign *for one hour*, or the brief duration of their kingdom, is an allegory, or an indication of one year's time and change.

He says that *they have one mind, and give their power and authority to the beast*. For though the ten kings will be opposed to one another in their opinions, yet in this they will have *one mind*: in giving *their power and authority to the beast*, that is, to the Antichrist. For they will be defeated by him, and he alone of all will rule over the rest. But even if they are defeated contrary to their will, since the ten suffer the same fate of defeat and removal, he said they *have one mind*; therefore, he was saying that as by agreement and unanimity the ten will be defeated by the Antichrist.

He says these *will make war with the Lamb*. For before they are completely overthrown by the Antichrist, these will persecute the church about which the book speaks. But Christ will prevail; for though they are evil, he will deliver them over to the worse Antichrist unto death. And in another way Christ will conquer: he will grant his servants endurance unto death for the faith striving toward him.

For he says they *are called and chosen and faithful*, those, that is, who are servants of Christ.

Revelation 17:15-18 ***And he says to me: the waters you saw where the prostitute sits are peoples and nations and multitudes and tongues. And the ten horns that you saw and the beast, these hate the prostitute, and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh, and will burn her with fire; for God has put into their hearts to do his***

purpose, and to make one mind, and to give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. And the woman whom you saw is the great city that has dominion over the kings of the earth.

He says *the waters* on which *the prostitute sits are peoples and nations*, on which the city, that is, holds the kingdom. But how will Rome be laid waste by the kings? For we understood that this was indicated through the Revelation. Perhaps to them she will be fought over as a royal city and stronghold and populous and collecting tributes. Therefore in the war concerning her she is forced to suffer as the prize of victory laid up for all, being burned and laid waste.

For God, he says, *has put into their hearts to do his purpose*. He says that God, granting forgiveness, will persuade those who oppose it and those willing to take it.

And he says that they will *make one mind, and to give their kingdom unto the beast*. And just as from one mind they will be handed over as subjects to the Antichrist, as was said before (see his comments on Rev 17:9-14), *until*, he says, *the words of God shall be fulfilled*. They, he says, will become subject to the beast until the punishment against the Antichrist also comes and the things spoken by the prophets by God are brought to an end, and upon him. More clearly, concerning the city about which the passage intends to signify, he brings forward that *the woman is the great city which has the dominion* over all.

Translator's notes for chapter 17.

1. "of the earth's fornication" [τῆς πορνείας τῆς γῆς]. The most common reading among the NT Greek manuscripts reads "of her fornication" [τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς,]

2. "*The beast which you saw, was and is not, and is about to rise up out of the abyss*," he says. For the Devil… This is the beast coming out of the earth that Oecumenius interpreted in 13:1. This is not Satan, but rather another fallen angel who was second in charge behind the Dragon Satan. Oecumenius also calls this entity "the Devil." One of the names that Oecumenius offered was "Lampetis," which means "the shining one" or "the luminous one."

3. Oecumenius, in his commentary on this passage in Philippians says, "*to all the saints in Christ Jesus*. For there were also Jews calling themselves holy; but Paul addresses those who are in Christ Jesus."

4. "Not all, but those whose names are <u>not</u> in the book of life." An obvious scribal error omitted "not" from the text. But due to the context it is obviously just a scribal error.

5. "but they receive [ἐξουσίαν] authority as kings for one hour with the beast.." The oldest Oecumenius manuscripts read, "but they have [ἔξουσιν] authority as…" It is more than likely a copyist error that has ἔξουσιν instead of ἐξουσίαν. Oecumenius manuscripts 203 (Salonika Blat. 53) and 240 (Athos 770) has the correct reading.

6. Eusebius, Chronicle 2.211-73.

CHAPTER 18

<u>Revelation 18:1-3</u> ***After these things I saw another angel descending out of heaven, having great authority; and the earth was illuminated by his glory. And he cried out with a loud voice, saying, Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great; and it has become a dwelling place of demons, and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird; for from the wine[1] of the fury of her fornication all the nations have been drunk[1], and the kings of the earth committed immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth grew rich by the power of her***

luxury. And I saw, he says, another angel having great authority.

He says that this one is the illuminated and enlightens *the earth by his glory*. "Babylon," he says, "*has fallen*." He proclaims against her the sentence of God. He says that she is destined to suffer these things, and she became *a dwelling-place of demons*. For the demons hate mankind and are bloodthirsty; wherever they find places where the blood of men has been shed, whether in wars or by other deaths, they take pleasure in the occurrence and make their abodes there. And since most shall be destroyed in the city, as he said earlier, the place becomes from now *a dwelling of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit and every unclean beast*; for such creatures flee from company with men, and, occupying the wildernesses, preserve themselves from those who would ambush them and from the hunt of those who pursue. Such things, Isaiah the prophet likewise says concerning Babylon. He says also: "There will the sirens[2] rest and there the demons dance; and there the one-horned centaurs will dwell and they will breed those scaly creatures in their houses." (Isa. 13:21-22)

For from of the fury of her fornication all the nations have been drunk. By "fornication" here he means their greed and love of money; for such is the manner of prostitutes. For those in the aforesaid city have indeed grown wealthy by *all the nations*, and after conquering them they ordained that they should pay tribute. And the *kings* say that the inhabitants of it have become partners and sharers of its love of money, and the *merchants* who trade there, it is said, *grew rich* from its wealth, that is, from its arrogance and unbridled, lavish and degenerate way of life, loading and disposing all kinds of cargo there.

<u>Revelation 18:4-8</u> ***And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, in case you take part***

in her sins and lest you receive of her plagues; for her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. Render to her even as she rendered, and double to her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mingled give her to drink double[3]. How much she has glorified herself and lived delicately, so much torment and sorrow give her; for she says in her heart, 'I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.' Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine, and she shall be utterly burned with fire; for strong is the Lord who judges her."

When the divine angels seized the city of the Sodomites to execute judgment upon its inhabitants and the neighboring towns, and more precisely, as seems in the writings of the holy Cyril[4], when the Son of God and the Holy Spirit moved there, "since the Father judges no one" according to the Scripture, "but has given all judgment to the Son," (Jn. 5:22) the Holy Spirit being present with him, clearly and essentially as the vivifying spirit, then they say to the godly Lot: "Save yourself, preserve your own soul; do not look back nor remain anywhere in the plain; flee to the mountain, in case you be taken up with them." (Gen. 19:7)

This is also what the Revelation now teaches us: since it is not possible in so great and populous a city as Rome that there should not also be slaves of Christ in it, he says to them, "*Come out of her, my people, in case you take part in her sins and lest you receive of her plagues*." For to share in her sins and plagues is to share with them; for the plagues are because of them.

For he says *her sins have reached to heaven*; as if to say that they even defiled the intervening air with their sins.

Therefore he says that God, having been very patient, has now risen for retribution. He therefore tells her to *render* sins *double*, although through the all-wise Moses God commanded us that

"one should not exact vengeance twice for the same thing." (see Deut. 32.41; Nahum 1:9) How then does he himself repay twice? *Double* [διπλᾶ] does not mean double in the numerical sense, but that, being loving toward mankind and good, and far less inclined to punish to the extent deserved, God considers that he has repaid twice even when he gives back a portion; and not only twice, but sevenfold. And knowing this the prophet said, "Return to our neighbors sevenfold into their bosom their reproach which they reproached you with, O Lord." (Ps. 78:12) From the petition for sevenfold vengeance he is asking God concerning the deserved punishment of the enemies, instead of which, he says, having been glorified and having squandered the providence of this present life, he has not fulfilled the divine will. *Render to her*.

For he says, "I will never be widowed of ruling"; for this is the *widow*, the one desolate of the ruler. I will see no evil. Therefore, because of her loftiness, all evil will come upon her at once; for he says God is *strong* and will be prevented by no one from bringing judgment and punishment upon her; may it be that by the grace of the one who called us into his knowledge and hope in Christ he would make us all free; to whom be glory for the ages. Amen.

[Tenth Discourse]

Further discourse concerning the Revelation about Rome; for it concerns a very great upheaval and, being foreign in character, is fittingly expressed in the account. What then does he say?

Revelation 18:9-19 ***And the kings of the earth, who committed fornication with her and reveled with her, will weep and mourn over her when they see the smoke of her burning; standing at a distance because of the fear of her***

torment, they will say: "Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon the mighty city, for in one hour your judgment has come." And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their cargoes anymore; no longer will one find among their cargoes gold and silver and precious stones and pearls and fine linen and purple and silk and scarlet, and every citron wood and every vessel of ivory and every costly vessel of wood and of bronze and iron and marble, and cinnamon and spice and incense and myrrh and frankincense and wine and oil and fine flour and wheat and cattle and sheep, and horses and chariots and bodies and souls of men. The fruit for which your soul lusted has gone from you, and all the bright and splendid things have perished from you, and they will never again find them[5]. The merchants who became rich by her will stand afar off because of the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning and crying: "Woe, woe, the great city, clothed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, adorned with gold and precious stone and pearls, for in one hour such great wealth has been laid waste." And every shipmaster and everyone who sails to a place[6], and all sailors, and as many as make their living by the sea, stood far off and cried when they saw the smoke[7] of her burning, saying: "What city is like the great city?" And they threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and mourning, saying: "Woe, woe, the great city, in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth; for in one hour she has been laid waste."

How in various ways and vividly he wove the lament over it and the height of mourning. And since almost everything is clear, if anything alone seems difficult, having noted it in passing let us proceed to the rest.

And he says *horses and chariots and bodies*. The word "chariots" is a Latin term; for with the Romans holding sway it is not inappropriate for the divine evangelist to have used a Latin word. The Scripture has put it into Greek. For in Latin the chariot is called *rheda* [ῥεδιον], and they put a general plural ending in the case; and one ought according to the Romans to say *rhedioroum* [ῥεδιοροὺμ], as having Hellenized it he wrote a Greek ending, having said *rhedōn* [ῥέδων], so that the said thing may be such. And he says *horses and chariots and bodies*, like also horses suitable for chariots, and bodies, that is, cavalry and made for riders.

Revelation 18:20-24 ***Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, for God has pronounced judgment for you against her. And a mighty[8] angel took up a millstone like a huge stone and cast it into the sea, saying, "Therefore with violence Babylon the great shall be thrown down, and it shall never be found again. And the voice of harpists and musicians and flutists and trumpeters shall never be heard in you again, and every craftsman and skillful worker shall never be found in you again, and the sound of a mill shall never be heard in you again, and the light of a lamp shall never shine in you again, and the voice of the bridegroom and the bride shall never be heard in you again; for your merchants were the great ones of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived, and in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who have been slain on the earth."***

The merchants and the kings of the earth and all who were enriched by the city standing and prospering will weep over it; but let the heavens rejoice, that is, the angels in heaven and the souls of the righteous, some because vengeance has been executed by

God, others as sharing in the joy of those avenged. Again, through the discussion in the narrative he lifts up the passion of spiritual Babylon; since these things are clear, it is not necessary to have them dwell among those who confess.

Translator's notes for chapter 18.

1. For this reading, there are two differences between the oldest Oecumenius manuscript reading and the common reading found the Greek NT. Manuscript 203 is the closest to the most common reading, for it translates into English the same but the Greek is slightly different. The oldest manuscript reading omits "of the wine" [τοῦ οἴνου], and reads "has fallen" [πέπτωκε], instead of "made drunk" [πέπωκαν]. Oecumenius manuscript 203 reads [πεπώκασι]. I have decided to go with the reading from Oecumenius manuscript 203. But in the comments on the text below, Oecumenius omits "of the wine", but does not read "have fallen" but the correct "have drunk".

2. Jerome of Stridon, in his commentary on Isaiah says this about "sirens", "The Hebrew word Thennim are called Sirens, which we interpret as either demons, or certain monsters, or certainly great dragons, which have crests and can fly." The Sirens are mythical creatures of ancient Greek mythology, dangerous bird-women (or later creatures with a fish tail) who lured sailors with their enchanting song and music, leading their ships to shipwreck on rocky coasts. Initially they were birds with women's heads. Over time, especially in post-classical art, they were identified with mermaids (with a fish tail).

3. Oecumenius omits "as much as she has filled herself with."

4. Cyril of Alexandria Adoration in Spirit and Truth 1 (PG 68:169-76).

5. The oldest Oecumenius manuscript reads "and they will nevermore find her [αὐτήν]," while the common reading in the Greek NT reads "and they will nevermore find them [αυτά]." Manuscripts 203 and 240 has the common reading, which I have adopted here, because that actually fits the context better, and was probably what Oecumenius originally used.

6. The common reading is "who sails to a place [τόπον]." The oldest Oecumenius manuscript reads "who sails on the river [τὸν ποταμὸν]." Manuscripts 203 and 240 has the common reading.

7. The common readings reads “they saw the smoke [τὸν καπνὸν].” The oldest Oecumenius manuscript and other witnesses read “they saw the anguish [τὸν τόπον].” I chose to use the common reading here because it is in Oecumenius manuscripts 203 and 240, which support the common reading.

8. The oldest Oecumenius manuscript reads, “And an angel took up a mighty millstone.” Oecumenius manuscripts 203 and 240 agrees with the common reading, “And a mighty angel took up a millstone.” The only difference is that the oldest manuscript modifies the stone instead of the angel. The oldest manuscript uses ἰσχυρόν, while the correct rendering is ἰσχυρὸς. I chose to use the correct re4adibng found in Oecumenius manuscripts 203 and 240.

CHAPTER 19

Revelation 19:1-5 ***After these things I heard a great voice of a multitude in heaven, saying, “Alleluia! Salvation and glory and power to our God, for his judgments are true and just; for he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her fornication, and has avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.” And a second time they said, “Alleluia!” And the smoke of her torment goes up for ever and ever. And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sits on the throne, saying, “Amen, Alleluia.” And a voice came from the throne, saying, “Praise our God, all his servants, you who fear him, small and great.”***

As from *a great multitude I heard a voice from heaven*: for the ranks of the holy angels are innumerable; as one of the Fathers said[1], the ninety-nine are the sheep (see Matt. 18:12, Luke 15:4) preserved and steadfast, the angels, and the one that was led astray is all humanity. And they said, “*Alleluia*.” The word alleluia is Hebrew; it means “praise” or “give thanks, praise God.” Therefore

they sing a song of thanksgiving at the righteous judgment of spiritual Babylon.

And a second time they raised the same hymn, and again he uttered it even more softly, that with the three times repeated *alleluia* the holy and much-praised Trinity might be glorified by them (see Rev 19:1, 3, 4); for this is God.

He says, *And the smoke of her torment goes up for ever and ever*. In the midst the alleluia being praised interrupted the sequence of the discourse, since this indeed is the course of the arrangement;

and has avenged the blood of his servants at her hand; *And the smoke of her torment goes up for ever and ever*. For smoke it says as of the city being utterly burned about which these things are said; for smoke is a sign of fire. But to have the *elders* and the *living creatures* say *Amen* denotes assent to the doxology brought by the holy angels; for the *Amen* signifies the voice transferred into Greek from the Hebrews, "so be it."

"*Praise our God*," it says, "*you small and you great*"; for he calls small those greater in sanctification, and great those who reign.

Revelation 19:6-9 ***And I heard like the sound of a great multitude and like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunders, saying, "Alleluia, for the Lord our God the Almighty reigns." And let us rejoice[2] and be glad, and let us give[2] him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his bride has prepared herself, and she was granted to be clothed with fine linen, bright and pure, for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. And he says to me, "Write: Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb." and he says to me, "These are the true words of God."***

Just as the Seraphim before the divine prophet Isaiah, having three times cried "Holy," (Isa. 6:3) enclosed the threefold hymn into one lordship, signifying the three as to their properties and persons, whereby the hymned are called beloved, but one as to the essence of the Godhead, so here likewise the heavenly angels, having three times in the front chanted the *Alleluia*, and having set the reverence upon each of the holy three hypostases, now sing the *Alleluia* in the Holy Trinity, showing that the holy and most-praised Trinity exists in a single essence and Godhead.

For he says, "*The Lord our God reigns*." Our Lord Jesus Christ, both before the saving incarnation the One who reigned in heaven and on earth together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, as the only-begotten Son and the Word of the Father and the Creator of all. And after the incarnation he is likewise Lord and King of all, in no way diminished by the flesh with respect to the source and kingdom of all.

But since, according to the most wise apostle (see 1 Cor 15:27-28), we do not yet see all things subjected to him, and in the age to come all things will be subjected and even those who now proudly lift up their necks against him will submit, just as even death itself will be subjected; “for death is abolished as the last enemy.” (1 Cor. 15:26)

For the heavenly angels fittingly say, “*The Lord our God has reigned*,” making the offering of praise unto the age to come, when, upon the most complete subjection of all things to Christ, whose kingdom is acquired over all, some will be delivered to punishment, others to personal knowledge, and not by a mirror or a riddle as now will they effect that subjection. (1 Cor. 13:12)

For, he says, *the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his bride has prepared herself*. The marriage present with the Lord is still an engagement to the church and not yet a completed marriage. And this the divine apostle associates, writing the second letter to

the Corinthians, in which he says: “for I engaged you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.” (2 Cor. 11:2)

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON 2 CORINTHIANS 11:2
“For I have betrothed you.” The whole passage refers to the Church. For after marriage she is a virgin. The present time is one of betrothal, and the time to come is of the end; as it is said, “The bridegroom has risen.” What then are the bridal gifts? The kingdom of heaven. David himself was also a forerunner of this betrothal when he said, “Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline thine ear.” (Ps. 45:10) And Paul too was a bridal attendant when he said, “For Christ’s sake we are ambassadors,” (2 Cor. 5:20) that he might receive the bride, he says. These things were typified in the matters concerning Abraham, who sent a servant to secure a virgin of the nations for his son; and God sent the prophets long ago, and later the apostles, to engage to the Son the Church from among the nations.

Therefore the matter is still an engagement; for “I engaged you: truly. And as the sign of the engagement, we receive “the pledge of the Spirit.” (2 Cor. 1:22) When, however, the church becomes one spirit with Christ, just as a husband is one body with his wife, then it is the perfect marriage. For even while philosophizing about the physical marriage, the wise apostle, adducing the scriptural statement that “the two shall be one flesh,” brings forward that “this mystery is great; but I say it of Christ and the church.” (Eph. 5:31-32)

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON EPHESIANS 5:32
"This mystery is great." How great? Because Christ, though it was possible for him to remain in his own glory, humbled himself in becoming man, so that he might be joined to the Church, and the two might become one spirit. For he who is joined, he says, to the Lord is one spirit.

Therefore the holy angels say: “*The marriage of the Lamb has come*,” signifying then the marriage that will be celebrated in the present engagement; for the Gospel clearly handed this down to us, where first it introduces marriages of a king’s son celebrated by the father, and many called to the feast, some partaking of the

banquet, others refusing the dinner, and one cast out who was not clothed in a wedding garment (Matt. 22:2-14); Then the same Gospel (Matt. 25:1-13) speaks of ten virgins, of whom five, whom it also calls wise, bringing their lamps to meet the bridegroom for that blessed wedding feast, while the excluded ones, when they had no oil left, extinguished their lamps; none of this is to be understood for the present time, but for the time to come.

Then *came the marriage of the Lamb, and his bride*, the Church, was ready to partake of those inexhaustible blessings that come from communion with Christ. She is said to be clothed in the garment of virtues, *clothed with fine linen*. Fine linen, because of its brightness and simple style: bright with blameless life and conduct, and simple in style [ισχνόν] with respect to doctrines and reflections concerning God.

And he says to me, "Write: Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb," and indeed go forth as is proper; for we know many who are called in the Gospels, but who have renounced the spiritual banquet or even, though they have gone away, are cast out as not having wedding garments, (Matt. 22:11-12) as is shortly shown. But the divine apostle also said, “many are called, but few are chosen.” (Matt. 22:14)

Revelation 19:10 ***And I fell down before his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "See that you do not do that; I am your fellow servant and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God; for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."***

The accursed and God-hating Greeks, hearing how it is a doctrine among us that holy angels by the good pleasure of God protect nations and churches and each one individually. Of the nations it is written by the most wise Daniel and “I came because of your

words. And the prince of the kingdom of the Persians stood against me," (Dan.10:12-13) and again "now I return to make war with the prince of the Persians; and I was going out, and the prince of the Greeks was coming," (Dan.10:20) and again "there is none to resist me on this matter except Michael your prince; " (Dan.10:21) and again "at that time shall arise Michael the great prince who stands over the sons of your people." (Dan. 12:1) But concerning the churches of the present unveiling it says this in those who have reached it, to which a companion writer, Gregory among the saints, says concerning the holy angels: "for I believe that different angels protect different churches, as John teaches me through the Revelation[3];" and concerning each one, in the prophet's saying "an angel of the Lord will be set around those who fear him and he will deliver them." (Ps. 33:8) Moreover also the apostle writing about the holy angels: "Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?" (Heb.1:14)[4]

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON HEBREW 1:14
Thus Gregory says in the second book "On the Son": ***"Are they not all ministering spirits?"*** He comforts them, saying: Christ is indeed the natural Son of God, but the angels are our servants: having been assigned this ministry, that they may do and administer all things so that we humans may be saved. For indeed, angels have frequently become ministers to men, as to Mary (Luke 1:26) and at the Lord's tomb (Matt. 28:2-7) and to Cornelius. (Acts 10:3)

Since then the Greeks hear these things being taught by us, they say to us, "Why do you, who hold the same opinions as we do, reproach the teaching among us that regards the leaders of nations as gods? For those whom you call angels we call gods," as if only our names were in dispute and not also the matters themselves. Not that you indeed call the order of angels gods, so that there would be no difference even in names between us. To these men, accursed and worshipping with the works of your hands, and having set up as gods yesterday and the day before those whom

you became acquainted with in all shameful things, who, having taken away most of the divine doctrines from us and bringing them into your destructive teachings, mingled them with your doctrines, but because you followed a guide who was a man and not God, you were not able to preserve the gentleness of all our teachings, and having followed him but a little, you shipwrecked perhaps about the first starting-point.

Therefore, nothing is common between us and you, just as neither is light common with darkness, nor Christ with Beliar (see 2 Cor. 6:14-15), as it is written.

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON 2 CORINTHIANS 6:14-15
Neither is light with darkness, nor Christ with Belial, that is, with the apostate and Satan; for Belial, in the Hebrew tongue, signifies the apostate. "What agreement has Christ with Belial?" In every way wishing to separate them from the unbelievers, he did not say "to the righteous and the lawless," but what was greater. He did not say "to the servants of light and of darkness," but it was the more severe. He did not say "to the ministers of Christ and to those of Satan," but it was the more dreadful. Then, lest comparisons lead one to despise the plain matters, he comes to the persons themselves. "To a faithful man, saith he, with an unbeliever." Thus: just as, he says, those mentioned above have nothing in common with one another, so neither has the faithful with the unbeliever. "What concord hath the temple of God with idols?" That is, likeness. Those, he says, are temples of idols; ye are the temple of God. What then fellowship have ye with them? That ye are a temple of God, he says, is evident from hearing the prophet Jeremiah.

For you, while setting up ethnic rulers as gods, or rather impure demons, introduce yourselves to them by assigning and wishing to offer reverence and worship as to gods; and indeed you treat some among you as divine and make no account of the One who appointed guardianship of men to God, but govern the nations by your own will as you yourselves may desire. Therefore you assigned to Ares the most savage and bloodthirsty peoples, the Scythians and the Germans, those who came to be governed by Ares as a scanty and murderous mortal would be; but to Athena

you assigned the Greeks as wise, having received their intelligence from her[5]; and you distributed other peoples to other gods, each of the gods arranging the nations according to his own dispositions. As for us, what shall we say concerning recognition from present things? For when one wished to worship the divine angel of the evangelist, and not to worship him as a god, for who more than John knew who is by nature and in truth God, and who the angels are, that they are ministers and servants and creatures of God?—nevertheless he appears to refuse even that worship as due to an angel, since worship in any case is present, and saying, *See that you do not do that; I am your fellow servant and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus*. The "See" is not merely a word preventing the act but is a claiming declaration. And he also calls himself a *fellow servant* of all who profess themselves servants of Christ and bear witness that God has been made flesh. What then is to be done, most divine angel, since you forbade yourself to be worshiped? Worship God; for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy, as if he said: Is that why you seek to worship me, because I have foretold to you the things that are to come? All those who testify to the lordship and divinity of Christ are filled with a prophetic gift, and I am not alone. Why then, he says, do you worship the same gift as is granted to my fellow servants? Likewise the Greeks are similarly glorified concerning their national founders, and Christians speak so concerning the holy angels.

<u>Revelation 19:11-16</u> ***And I saw the heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes were*** [6] ***a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; he had a name written, that no man knew but himself; and he was clothed with a garment sprinkled***[7] ***with blood. And his name is called The Word of***

God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of his mouth went a sharp sword, that with it he should strike the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he has on his garment and on his thigh a name written, King of kings, And Lord of lords.

After the hour of Babylon's destruction; and it is clear who Babylon is understood to be, and this is further shown to the evangelist, the fall of the Antichrist and of the arch-evil Dragon, and into what relentless punishment at the time of the end and of retribution, and the destruction of the kings who will arise against the servants of Christ at that time, and see what he says.

I saw the heaven opened, and behold a white horse, *and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness*. The Lord alone I behold fighting alongside and leading in battle the saints and warring against the adversaries.

Therefore the vision also bestows upon him a military form, handing him a *horse* and a *sword* and the leadership of *armies*. *And behold*, it says *a white horse* on which the Lord rode, signifying by the riddle that Christ rests not with others but with the pure and with those unspotted by the filth of sin. Therefore concerning the vessel of Paul's calling it is said by the Lord, "to bear my name before the nations and the kings of the sons of Israel." (Acts 9:15) Observe then that Christ rests and rides upon those who are according to Paul.

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON ACTS 9:15
For he says that he is a vessel of election. Therefore, he says, he showed that he is approved; for an approved thing is chosen as a vessel. And he will be not only faithful, he says, but also a teacher and a preacher to the inhabited world, and will also suffer much for my sake. For this reason he says that he is a vessel of election to me, and that he will bear my name.

And he who sits *upon him*, that is, upon the *horse*, is *called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and wages war*. *Faithful* is the *true* one according to the apostle who speaks concerning him; "he remains faithful; he cannot deny himself." (2 Tim. 2:13)

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON 2 TIMOTHY 2:13
If we are faithless, he remains faithful. If we are faithless concerning that he rose from the dead, or that he is God, he remains faithful, that is, true. For having said that he will rise, and that he is God (for this was signified in many ways), he is faithful. For he rose and he is God. He says that ***he cannot deny himself***, so as not to be God or to have risen. Just as he said: There will be no change because of our denial, but he remains faithful and true concerning himself. And to deny, that is, to lie to himself, he cannot do, in not having risen or not being God. For having promised concerning himself, he cannot lie to himself and fail to fulfill the promises. For neither by believing do we make him not God, nor by being unfaithful do we cast out the divine nature, but both in our believing and in our unbelief he himself is God. Therefore, we who believe reap the benefit. But the "It is not possible," instead of, "It is not permitted." "*He remains faithful*." Therefore, for our salvation, he demands from us consent to him. For, he says, it is not harmed by our denial.

Therefore *Faithful and True*; for of the same one it has been said, two names applied to one matter. And because *he judges* righteously and *wars* against the sensible enemies on behalf of his servants, the prophet who speaks is witness, "Give to the king your judgment, and to the son of the king your righteousness," (Ps. 72:1) that is, to Christ; for the Christ according to the flesh is the son of Solomon, to whom the Psalm is then assigned, going on "to judge your people in righteousness and your poor with judgment." (Ps. 72:2)

That the same one also wages *war*, he shows that he arms him militarily by saying: "tighten your sword upon your thigh, mighty one, for your beauty and your splendor, and be strong, and show

kindness and reign"; then adding "your sharpened arrows, mighty one: peoples will fall under you." (Ps. 45:3-5)

And his eyes, he says, are *a flame of fire*. The wrath against the enemies, he shows by the burning of the *eyes*.

And on his head he says *many crowns*, as many certainly as there are orders reigning in heaven and on earth.

He says *he had a name written, that no man knew but himself*. God says in the Exodus of the seventh day to the prophetic Moses: "I am the Lord who appeared to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob being their God; and I did not declare to them my name, the Lord," (Ex. 6:2-3) as clearer than or capable of being conveyed by human hearing. Therefore, and as the Lord instructed the apostles to baptize those returning to the knowledge of God, he said, "baptizing them into the name," and by saying "name" he did not hand over the proper names; for he did not have the strength to sustain their proclamation, but instead he delivered it in relational and nominative terms in place of the proper names, relational when saying "into the name of the Father and of the Son," and nominative when also invoking "and of the Holy Spirit." (Matt. 28:19) Therefore, very securely and in the Revelation the divine name of the Only-Begotten is allowed to be unknown to all.

He says *he was clothed with a garment sprinkled with blood*; for in the vision the Lord also bore the symbols of the Passion and showed the all-holy body stained only with his precious *blood*.

And his name is called the Word of God. Do you see how, fleeing the divine name in the heavens above, the vision has now set a nominative in its place, saying "*the Word of God*"?

And heavenly hosts *followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen*; for the Lord is both the commander of the heavenly powers and has so named himself, speaking as Joshua son of Nun.

(see Jos. 5:14) Saying, “I the commander-in-chief of the power of the Lord, have now appeared.” (Jos. 5:14)

And the *horses* are *white* even to the holy angels; for they likewise take pleasure in those pure of men, since they are pure in nature and unmingled with any stain. And this is shown by that garment of *white and fine linen*.

And *out of his mouth*, namely of the commander-in-chief, a *sword* proceeds. Therefore the divine prophet gives the sword to the Lord's thigh for use placed a little before (Ps. 44:4); but the vision, writing more precisely, presents it at the *mouth*. By which it is signified that by the word of God all things subsist, and whoever transgresses it in any way will not go unpunished, so that by him he may *strike the nations*. What kind of nations? Those who join with the Antichrist against the servants of Christ and are placed under him.

And he says that *he shall rule them with a rod of iron*; for the Lord, being supremely good and merciful, would shepherd these nations about whom the word speaks with a shepherd’s and consoling rod, “leading them to a place of pasture and nourishing them at waters of rest.” (Ps. 22:2) But since they have not willed this, they shall be shepherded with *an iron rod*, that is, with strict and deadly discipline. For whom the word does not reform, those it certainly submits to punishment. And because *the iron rod* denotes strict and punitive action, the prophet, intending to signify the rule of the Romans about which Daniel says, “Arise, devour much flesh,” (Dan. 7:5) said to God, “You shepherd them with an iron rod: as with earthen vessels you will crush them.” (Ps. 2:5) But when the season was favorable God shepherded by means of that; in the last time by means of this.

And he treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. The Lord in the Gospels said concerning the heavenly Father, “The Father judges no one; and he gave all

judgment to the Son." (Jn. 5:22) It is therefore most fittingly said in the Revelation that he himself *treads the winepress of the fury of the anger of God*; for by judgment and recompense of the wicked he fulfills the paternal will and becomes the fulfiller of the righteous anger of the Father.

And it is *written* upon *his garment and on his thigh*: *King of kings and Lord of lords*. The *garment* is understood to be the flesh of the Lord; it is interpreted spiritually as flesh and blood, according to the holy interpreters who cite Isaiah: "Why are your garments red, and your clothing like one who treads the fully trampled winepress?" (Isa. 63:2-3)

But the *thigh* signifies the fleshly birth; for it is written in Genesis, "all the souls that went into Egypt with Jacob are those who came forth from his loins." (Gen. 46:26) This, then, shows the riddle *written on the garment and on the thigh*: that the *King* of all is Emmanuel. For although the Word was united to flesh in hypostasis and endured the fleshly birth from the Virgin, he nevertheless was established as King and Lord of all (Isa. 7:14), both of those in heaven and of those on earth, not diminished in worth by the incarnation; for he was and is and will be God.

<u>Revelation 19:17-21</u> ***And I saw another angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in midheaven, Gather yourselves together unto the great supper of God; that you may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the False Prophet that wrought***

miracles before him, by which he had deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image: these two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the rest were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

I believe this holy *angel* about whom the speech now is to be some sort of military herald of the divine host. And that he commands all the holy angels in heaven, whom he conventionally calls *birds* because of their elevation and ability to fly through the air, to share in the slaughter against the enemies; not that a single angel were unable to destroy the whole host of enemies, for that was clearly shown by him who in one night struck down one hundred and eighty-five thousand of the Assyrians (see 2 Kings 19:35), but so that all might become participants in the joy over the enemies. For I think he even says with the prophet, "Did I not hate those who hate you, O Lord, and was I not hostile to your enemies? I utterly hated them; they became enemies to me." (Ps. 139:21)

And when he commissioned the angels flying *in midheaven*, he himself also stood in *midheaven* and proclaimed; for the sun is set in the midst of the seven planets, having three above it and three below it.[8] Either therefore this, or that the proclamation was made in the light as in a spirit, and he was speaking of the doom of those murders about to be, for the spirit is an intelligible light toward God, as the prophet teaches; and making his words a father and saying, "In your light we shall behold light," (Ps. 138:21-22) that is, we will see the Spirit in the Son.

He says, *that you may eat the flesh of kings*. And he calls the feast over the death of enemies an eating of these and those; for therefore also the Lord names joy when speaking to his disciples and apostles: "I have a food to eat which you do not know," (Jn. 4:32) calling in this way the gladness that is to come upon the

believers. The *war* with the Lord and the divine angels was waged by both the Devil and the Antichrist, for he calls him a false prophet of the beastly Devil, and kings who band together with them; but they were defeated sooner than speech.

What do the divine Scriptures say about them? Isaiah says, "Let the impious be taken away, so that he may not see the glory of the Lord," (Isa. 26:10) the sudden annihilation; but the apostle, "whom the Lord will consume by the breath of his mouth." (2 Thess. 2:8) What is swifter than to breathe upon and blow the enemies away?

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON 2 THESSALONIANS 2:8
"whom the Lord will consume." Then follows relief. Whom Christ, he says, will *destroy*. For just as, while a fire is still at a distance, small creatures are consumed by the heat, so likewise Antichrist will be consumed from the very coming of Christ and ***by the breath of his mouth***. And he calls the *breath of the mouth* a command and precept, and as it were a blast, or the Holy Spirit. "**will consume,"** that is, restrain, destroy.

"*And those two*," he says, "*were cast alive into the lake of fire, and the rest were slain by the sword*." O excess of justice! He did not deem the authors of the war and those co-responsible worthy of the same punishment; but the two, namely the Devil and the Antichrist, were condemned to fire, in which they will live forever, for this is hinted by their being cast alive into the fire; the rest were slain by the sword. By far it is preferable to give judgment by the sword briefly than by fire. Having begun once to speak about the judgment which he will give to the Devil, guarding the continuity of the discourse, he also recounts what he suffered in the incarnation of the Lord; and taking this as his theme, he speaks more at length about the Lord's presence in the flesh, and says:

Translator's notes for chapter 19.

1. This is from Epiphanius Homily 4, On the Ascension of Christ. The text from Epiphanius says… “Wherefore arise, let us go hence; for my heavenly Father awaits the lost sheep; the ninety and nine sheep (see Matt. 18:12, Luke 15:4), the angels, are waiting for the time when Adam their fellow-servant should arise, when he should ascend and return to God. A cherubic throne is set, and those who bear it aloft are ready and waiting, the bridechamber is furnished, the choice foods are made, the everlasting tabernacles and mansions are built, the treasuries of blessings are open, the kingdom of heaven has been prepared before the ages. (see Matt. 25:34) The good things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man (1 Cor. 2:9), are laid up in store for mankind.”

2. The oldest Oecumenius manuscript reads indicatives χαίρομεν and δώσομεν, the common reading uses subjunctives χαίρωμεν and δώσωμεν. The older Oecumenius manuscript reading would be, “And we will rejoice and be glad, and we will give him the glory.” I have chosen to use the common reading based upon manuscripts 203 and 240.

3. Gregory of Nazianzus Orations 42.9

4. Here is an example of Oecumenius here in his commentary on Revelation showing parallels with his other commentaries. In his commentary on Hebrews, Oecumenius also quotes this passage from Hebrews and quotes the Orations of Gregroy Nazianzus. He said, *Thus Gregory" says in the second book "On the Son": "Are they not all ministering spirits?" He comforts them, saying: Christ is indeed the natural Son of God, but the angels are our servants: having been assigned this ministry, that they may do and administer all things so that we humans may be saved. For indeed, angels have frequently become ministers to men, as to Mary (Luke 1:26) and at the Lord's tomb (Matt. 28:2-7) and to Cornelius. (Acts 10:3)*

5. see Homer, Iliad 5.31, 455, 844, 846.

6. The oldest Oecumenius manuscript does not have “like”, but manuscripts 203 and 240 do. I have chosen to not add “like” because it is not in any of the manuscripts below in his (Oecumenius) comments.

7. Oecumenius manuscripts 203 and 240 read “dipped” [βεβαμμένον]. The oldest Oecumenius manuscript reads “sprinkled” [ἐρραμμένον], and manuscript 240 has it in the margin. I have chosen to use “sprinkled”.

8. The phrase "the sun is set in the midst of the seven planets, having three above it and three below it" describes a classical, geocentric (earth-centered) model of the cosmos, often found in ancient and medieval astronomical, Hermetic, and occult literature.

CHAPTER 20

Revelation 20:1-3 ***I saw an angel descending from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he seized the Dragon, the ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and cast him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be fulfilled; after these things he must be released for a little while, that he may again deceive the nations.***

For he continues in this way. Could it not be that the thousand years of the atheistic Greeks and the transmigrations of souls and the water of Lethe[1], and I do not know what foolish confusions the Revelation hands over to us, saying that *the Devil* will be *bound for a thousand years* and then will be released and *will deceive the nations*? Away with such destructive doctrines and with the silliness fitting for the Greeks. What then does it say has been spoken to the prophet? "That a thousand years are in your sight, O Lord, as yesterday that is past, and as a watch in the night." (Ps. 90:4) Therefore the *thousand years* are reckoned as one day in the sight of God. The same is said in the second epistle of Peter the inspired, who wrote: "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." (2 Peter 3:8)[2] This indeed is so.

For certainly to him who is infinite and the sea of essence unconstrained, nothing is extended, but ***a thousand years are just like a single day with him***. Or rather, according to David, there is no multiplication of days: for he says in this way: "A thousand years in your sight, O Lord, are like a day that has just gone by and like a watch in the night" (Ps. 89:4): by watch signifying the briefest span of the night. For the night is divided into four watches: since the Lord came to the holy apostles in the fourth watch. (Matt. 14:25)

Moreover the inspired Isaiah says that all the human life of the Lord is one day, saying: “In a favorable time I listened to you, and in a day of salvation I helped you.” (Isa. 49:8) Not only that, but the Psalmist also calls that day both “day” and “morning,” saying on the one hand, “This is the day which the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it,” (Ps. 118:24) the joy of our salvation; and on the other hand singing, “In the morning you will hear my voice; in the morning I will present myself to you,” (Ps. 5:4) and I will look upon you; for our prayers are well-received when deemed worthy of the vision of God and the Father, through the Lord’s mediation and reconciliation. And again concerning Jerusalem he says: “God will help her with the dawn of the morning.” (Ps. 46:5) And the day and the morning became the indicator of the Lord’s incarnation, as “the Sun of righteousness” shone upon us. For therefore Malachi speaks of him, (Mal. 4:2) and bringing us “the light of knowledge,” (Hos. 10:12) concerning which the divine light Zachariah preannounced, saying: “a rising to us from on high has visited those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death”; (Luke 1:78-79; see Zech. 14:6-7) to which the prophet also added, “God said, the Lord, and he appeared to us to appoint a feast among those who burn incense up to the horns of the altar.” (Ps. 117:27)

Having therefore prefaced these matters, proceed to the point in hand. Since it has been said that a day is reckoned by God as *a*

thousand years, and conversely the day is called the Lord's sojourn on earth, he declares this day to be *a thousand years*, as if there is no distinction before God between a single day and *a thousand years*; in which day, that of the Lord's incarnation, the *Devil* was *bound*, being unable to resist the Savior's divine signs [θεοσημείαις[3]].

Wherefore, perceiving this bondage of the spiritual realm, the true demons cried out, "What have we to do with you and with us, Son of the living God? Have you come before the appointed time to torment us?" (Matt. 8:29) But the Lord, while loosing their bonds, said: "Or how can one enter the house of the strong man and plunder his goods, unless he first bind the strong man? and then he will plunder his house." (Matt. 12:29) Since, therefore, as has been said, we have conceived of the Incarnation of the Lord and his sojourn on earth as lasting one day and *a thousand years*, this same number being mystically called in the divine Scripture without distinction, see what the Revelation says.

I saw another *angel descending from heaven*, *holding the key of the abyss and a chain*, *and* having *seized* he says the *Devil* was *bound and cast into the abyss*. As on a painted canvas the things that were spiritually affected by the Lord against the Devil are shown to the evangelist. For since the things that are spiritual could not be seen by a man, John being a human, the events are portrayed to him bodily: an *angel* having a *chain* and bonds binding the *Devil and casting him into the abyss*; for therefore also the book of Job, fashioning in a material sense the attempt of the Devil and the patience of God, made Job the one tested by God, and set down God as offering suitable words for request and giving along with the things that happened. Therefore, now you will perceive rightly in this way with me.

He says, *that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be fulfilled*; for it was necessary that the

Lord's abiding on earth should have some further element of providential oversight and guardianship, in order by this to prevent the unclean demons from working against men as they had done in the times before the Incarnation.

And after these things, he says, *that he must be released for a little while*. What does he mean by *little while*? The interval between the Lord's incarnation and the end of the present age; for this is *a little while*, even if it may seem great, being measured and compared with both the past and the future. For if in the "last" and on the "eleventh" hour (Matt. 20:6, 9.) the Lord our God appeared bodily according to the faith of the sacred writings, rightly is the time up to the end called *a little while*, after which once more the eternal and unending bond will be *bound*. But even when he is released, bind again, O Lord, his plotting against us; for you are our King and to you belongs the glory forever. Amen.

[Eleventh Discourse]

The Revelation continues in the same manner. For he says:

> **Revelation 20:4-8** ***And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them; and the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and who had not worshiped the beast nor his image, and had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were completed[4], this is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who has part in the first resurrection. Over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years. And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will***

be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth.

And in the foregoing, it was said in words that the vision, having once made mention of the Devil, as if keeping one section as a record for the narrative, shows not only what the Devil will do at the end of the present age, but also what he has experienced spiritually in the Incarnation of the Lord. Taking up that very section, it sets forth more concerning the Lord's presence in the flesh, as is now placed before us for contemplation.

For he says, *And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them*. He beholds the holy apostles, according to the promise made to them, "seated upon twelve thrones and judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Matt. 19:28) Which indeed will be fulfilled more perfectly in the age to come but also occurred to a degree at the time of the Incarnation. For those who had believed in the Lord and been transformed into countless good things judged those who did not willingly run to the faith, nor, having been led by the grace given to the apostles into devotion toward unity, did they ascend, but rather wove for him a cross and death.

And he says, that *the souls of those* crowned were slain because of *the testimony of Jesus and* because *of the word of God*. He saw them sitting together on *thrones* and judging the rest of mankind.

He says that *those who had been beheaded* means those who were killed with axes. He speaks metaphorically about the dead who lost their limbs because of faith in Christ, and most of them endured this for that reason. For they were made outcasts, were subjected to countless insults, and had their possessions seized by theft, as the wise apostle testifies (see Heb. 10:34), since they wholly believed in Christ.

"the plundering." It is great to bear the plunder of resources. And when it is accepted even with joy, it is apostolic.

Concerning these the Lord also said, "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you and utter every evil word against you falsely on my account." (Matt. 5:11)

If you follow the continuity of the argument and taking every thought captive to the obedience of the divine Scripture, you will understand that those who do *not worship the beast nor receive his mark and his image*, as not like-minded with the rest of the Jews in plots against the Lord, nor willing to submit to the suggestions of the God-hating Devil; for this is to *worship* him and his *image*. For he calls an *image* the impressing of his will upon the hearts of the Jews. And he calls it a *mark*, encompassing their ruling and practical parts; for the form of the ruling part is the head, of which the *forehead* is a part, and the *hand* is of the practical part.

And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. A *thousand years* again he calls, according to what was said before, the Lord's reign upon earth, by which they lived the spiritual life, and they reigned together with Christ, commanding demons, rebuking passions, and working countless miracles. Not that even the mere thought that he should share the kingship of the glory with Christ is granted to him alone. (see 2 Tim. 2:10-12) Therefore it is also said concerning them by the prophet in the phrase "the heavenly kings upon it shall be whitened in Selmon." (Ps. 68:14)

And concerning *the rest of the dead* he says they *did not live again until the thousand years are completed*. He calls *dead* those who have remained in unbelief, about whom also the Lord said, "let the dead bury their own dead." (Matt. 8:22)

Therefore, the unbelievers did not live the spiritual life until the time of the Incarnation is fulfilled, which is the *thousand years*;

for after these things they lived. How? By the visitation and presence of the Holy Spirit. For then most of the Jews will have believed in Christ, those who did not believe in him when he was present bodily among them. For the matter was administered in the most divine way, and beyond what human reason could have hoped for; for in the Old Covenant the Father was proclaimed and known, and by the Incarnation and the countless divine signs and powers the Son was proclaimed; but the Holy Spirit had not yet been clearly revealed to men. But only a word [Λόγος] about the Spirit existed in the Old Covenant, and there was no work that was evident and perceptible, nothing that most of all leads people to faith, as with the Son, although it was known to those who had advanced into the depths of contemplation. That indeed all things that have been done and fashioned by the Holy Trinity have been accomplished, and the Lord clearly presents this, where he says "the Father gave me a commandment what I should say and what I should speak," (Jn. 12:49) and again: "I can do nothing from myself," (Jn. 8:28) bringing the things that happen into the Trinity; and again to John: "the Son of man cannot do anything of himself unless he sees the Father doing it," (Jn. 5:19) and he further confirms: "if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God." (Matt. 12:28) But since, as has been said, the work of the Holy Spirit was not perceptible to people, he arranged that almost all people should receive faith in Christ by the visitation and power of the Paraclete[5] and of God the Father, so that indeed the consubstantial and equal-to-all relation of the Son to the Father might become clear. It is needless to say that in the whole period of the Incarnation there are recorded not more than one hundred and twenty who had believed; for the Acts specify so many gathered together in the upper room. (Acts 1:15)

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON ACTS 1:15
One hundred and twenty of those who believed in the Lord were present. For there were also seventy and five hundred, whom Paul likewise he says saw the risen Lord. But likely these were among the more approved and the warmer in boldness.

Even if the power of Christ's teaching has been proven to many, faith in that presence was preserved by the Spirit. Therefore, one might find, as with a scattered seed, that whenever rain comes and the sun shines, all the formerly hidden and unnoticed seeds in the earth then spring up, clearly showing that they had entirely been committed to the earth; so it occurs with the visitation of the Holy Spirit. All those to whom the Lord's teaching was sown have risen toward faith.

Therefore, it is said more precisely in the Revelation that *the rest of the dead did not live until the thousand years should be completed*. *This*, he says, *is the first resurrection*, namely the resurrection of faith; for the second will be the universal resurrection of bodies.

Blessed therefore *is the one who has part in the first resurrection*; for of the second resurrection we shall all partake, willingly or unwillingly. But concerning those who are participants in the *first resurrection*, that is, the faithful, *the second death* will have *no power*. What is it? It is the death of sin, that is, and the punishment of that time; for just as he said first and second resurrection, so also first and *second death*.

And the first death is the physical death, the one having a separation of soul and body; *second death* is the spiritual death, that of sin, about which the Lord also said, "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body; rather be afraid of him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna." (Matt. 10:28) And the faithful are, he says, *priests of God and of Christ*; for the faithful have all been shown to be ministers of the evangelical word, concerning whom the prophet, striking his prophetic harp, said "he would appoint them rulers over all the earth." (Ps. 45:16)

And they *will reign with him for a thousand years*, those of the Incarnation as has been often said.

And when he says that *when the thousand years are ended*, that is, when the Lord, having fulfilled the economy of his flesh, has returned to the heavens, the bonds of the spiritual powers will be loosed from the Devil, and again he will *deceive the nations*; for it has been said in what has been spoken before that the Lord's presence among men abolishes the activity of the Devil. But since the Lord has ascended into the heavens, it is the Devil who will exercise his ordinary and habitual powers, and those on earth will use their free will as they used to; for the Devil endeavors to deceive all. Some, however, are persuaded, while others, by resisting, contend against the evil one.

But one might perhaps say: and why, being somewhat restrained and hindered in his natural impulse by the bodily presence of the Lord, was the Devil nevertheless allowed once more to deceive those on earth? For would it not have been better that he be bound, and that men remain unled astray? To this it must be replied: why do you rather ask of him the origin, how the Devil came into being, than, having come and transgressed, why he was not utterly destroyed, so that no opportunity against men might remain to him? And how, then, sir, were the contestants trained if there was no opponent at all? And how, moreover, was the strength of the athletes shown if there was no rival? For the careless are inferior in men and in pleasures, and, with no Devil present to incite them, are altogether foolish on their own; but those who are men of God and brave contestants would be wronged if their courage against the passions were not made public; as happens, that the careless gain nothing when Satan is absent, and the zealous are most greatly wronged. For Satan is in a manner a trainer of men, providing an occasion of crowns to those who struggle. For the sinful, who even without the presence of the Devil, through their own negligence make use of him instead of the Devil, are not even

wronged, as has been said. Therefore, he benefits some unwillingly, and does no wrong to others, or very little. But you wished through me and you, the "slaves of sin" (Rom. 6:16) and stripped and fallen, that we be deprived by the activity of the Devil of the glory of patriarchs and prophets, of apostles and evangelists and those who endured even to blood for the witness of Christ and kept what is genuine for him, moreover of confessors and those shepherds esteemed good for the churches and the most steadfast abstainers and all that is righteous and perfected in the faith of Christ, "of whom this world is not worthy." (Heb. 11:38)[6] So that the brave champions of virtue console the punishment of sinners whose brief crimes are judged, for one who succeeds is to be preferred by the God, even when ten thousand reject Him.

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS 11:38
"of whom the world was not worthy." This also encourages them. For if this world was not worthy of those who suffer badly for the sake of God, that is, all people and this creation itself, why do you, he says, wish to receive the rewards here for the sufferings endured for Christ? For being better than the world, do not seek anything in this world.

Both therefore were brought about in the fairest and most inspired manner, and that in the Lord's presence the impious impulses of the Devil were cut off, and after the Lord's ascent into heaven he was loosed for the testing of men. For if Satan had been allowed to display all his power while the Lord was dwelling on earth, he would not have permitted men even to be hearers of His divine teaching or to learn who is by nature and in truth God, or what religion is acceptable to Him, or what wickedness and what virtue are; indeed he would have prepared the cross for Him beforehand and begun it even before the teaching. Were this to happen, the incarnation of the Lord and so great and so honorable a mystery would have been incomplete and, rather, useless. But after these things were taught on earth under the bondage of the Devil, men were left thereafter to use their own free will and to contend with

the adversary by means of those confessed and unknown ways of wickedness and of virtue. For he who knows the good and the not-good, by self-willed impulses chooses one thing or the other at any cost; but he who is ignorant of what he should do, as one wounded in a night-battle and unaware even that he has been struck, does not even know his own ruin. For in the case of one who has knowledge of opposites there is room for self-choice to select what he wishes, but for the ignorant there is no room. God made man free from the beginning and governed him by sovereign planning.

That it is necessary first to know virtue and vice, so that the land may therefore be subject to free choice, see what the advocator[7] Moses says to the disobedient people of Israel in Deuteronomy: "Behold, I have set before you this day life and death, the good and the evil," (Deut. 30:15) that you may surely choose the thing which is preferred; and again the same in Exodus: "If you will indeed listen to the voice of my words and do them, he says, all that I shall say to you." (Ex. 23:32) And what says Isaiah, of whom the same teaching is cited at the beginning of his prophecy, speaking from the presence of God: "If you will and will hear me, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you will not and will not hear me, the sword will devour you; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken these things." (Isa. 1:19-20)

Therefore, enough of these things. But since he said in what has gone before that the Devil will come forth to *deceive the nations*, he now says what nations and from whom they are gathered: He says,

<u>Revelation 20:8</u> ***Gog and Magog, to gather them to the war.***

A *war*, however, against the saints. For having fulfilled the discourse concerning the salvific incarnation, he again returned from where he had gone out and related those things to us. He had gone forth from the Devil and the Antichrist; and from the defeat and punishment of the nations taken with them. Now I complete what was previously said insufficiently. He joins to the remaining nations those who have joined battle with the Antichrist; and *Gog*, thus saying:

> **Revelation 20:8-10** ***And he went out to deceive all the nations that are in the four corners of the earth*****;** among whom he says also ***Gog and Magog, to gather them together to the war, whose number is like the sand of the sea. And they went up over the extent of the earth, and they will surround the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them; and the Devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the False Prophet are, and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever*****.**

Concerning these, of *Gog and of Magog*, the prophetic seer Ezekiel delivered a prophecy, explaining how the wicked will be destroyed. These will be certain nations and rulers of nations gathered around the end (see Ezek. 38-39); for now they do not yet exist, or they are some of the nations now existing called by different names in the divine Scripture. These therefore will resist the God-hating Satan against the servants of Christ.

And they will surround the beloved city, that is, the Church.

But *fire* brought *from heaven* will devour *them* all, and when the end has come, the prime evil Satan will be cast together with the *Devil* and the Antichrist[8] *into the lake of fire*, that is, Gehenna.

Let the reader know that the present Revelation has handed down to us three things in the foregoing: first, the original evil Dragon shown in heaven; second, a beast rising from the sea, whom we understood to be second in command to Satan, but superior to the other demons; and third, the Antichrist, whom he also calls *the False Prophet*. But concerning the second, the Devil, and the Antichrist it was said a little above (Rev. 19:20) that the two were *thrown into the lake of fire burning with brimstone*. Now concerning Satan, or rather the Devil, whom in the preceding passages he named the Dragon, he says that *they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever*. Therefore, the one who met the vision perceived very precisely that the thousand years, during which the Devil was bound and cast into the abyss and then released, we understood to be the Lord's dominion and his reign on earth, in which the Devil's activity was suspended for a short time. For now he has shown that their punishment and that of those deceived by him is not for a thousand years, and that, far from being a release from evil, it is for ever and ever.

> **Revelation 20:11-12** ***And I saw a great white throne and the one who sat on it, and from before his presence the earth and the heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and the little scrolls were opened; and another little scroll was opened, which is the little scroll of life; and the dead were judged from the things written in the little scrolls according to their works.***

He calls the *white throne*, bright and flashing. The passage alludes to the passing of the heavens and the alternation and transformation of the earth. "For the heavens will pass away with a great noise," (2 Peter 3:10)[9] according to the divine Peter and

according to the prophet who says: "At the beginning you founded the earth, O Lord, and the heavens are the work of your hands.

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON 2 PETER 3:10
Therefore, the Lord also says that just as in the days of Noah there were men rejoicing in weddings and drinking, thinking nothing of the future calamity that would overtake them (Matt. 24:38), until the flood overwhelmed them: so too will the coming of the Lord suddenly come upon the wicked. The word ***"noise"*** indeed means sound. However, the sound of this kind is proper to fire in those things that are fed by fire. Note, however, that it has said the earth and what is in it must be burned up, but not men, but only destruction has been said concerning the wicked or their transgressions. For the way of the wicked will perish, but the wicked himself will not.

They themselves will perish, but you remain; and all will wear out like a garment, and you will roll them up like a cloak, and they will be changed," (Ps. 101:26-27) fittingly their passing and destruction. Which the Revelation called flight, signifying their change, so that they might not find a place; for where would the ruin they have rejected be found? Now he has spoken of their change, and going on a little, he says that there will be new ones as well. (see Rev. 21:1,5)

And I saw, he says, *the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne*. He calls the righteous *great,* not because of bodily size, but because of the glory and brilliance of virtue, and he calls the sinners *small* as nothing because of their lowliness and baseness.

And the little scrolls were opened; and another little scroll was opened, which is the book of life. The Lord in the Gospels says that the way leading to punishment is broad and spacious, and that many go on it; but that the way leading to life is narrow and compressed, and that few are not only walking on it, but also finding it (see Matt. 7:13-14). Therefore, he saw many scrolls and one scroll; many in which all men are written because of the multitude of those contained, one however of life, in which are

those chosen from the others and who are as it were flawless in virtue and walking every rough and upward road of virtue.

And he says that each of those in the scrolls was *judged* according to his own deeds. And at the beginning of the sixth discourse he also remembers another little scroll, which he calls a tiny scroll [βιβλιδάριον[10]].

Now the scroll and little scroll of life are threefold in meaning: he calls a tiny scroll in which are those very ungodly according to what is conceived there; the little scroll of life, in which are the very pious and righteous; and scrolls, in which all people are somewhat average, partaking of wickedness and virtue; and speaking of the matters concerning the resurrection:

For to say "and *I saw the dead standing before the throne* receiving and being *judged according to their works*" is to speak of the resurrection. For having risen, he saw the reward for the dead, receiving his recompense, and further narrates in what manner the resurrection took place; "Indeed, he says,

> **Revelation 20:13-15** ***And the sea gave up the dead that were in it, and Death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each was judged according to their works. And Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire, this is the second death.[11] And if anyone was not found written in the little scroll of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.***

Those who disbelieve in the resurrection of bodies mock both us and our doctrine that these bodies will be raised again, as if this were not only difficult but wholly impossible. And they say that each of the bodies on earth is composed of the four basic elements, fire, water, earth, air, and that bodies dissolved by death return to those elements from which they were originally formed.

Therefore, the fiery element in us returns to its kindred universal fire; the watery element to water; and the other components to their proper counterparts. If then these are dissolved and mingled with their own substances, how can that which has become indiscernible by composition be restored again to every one of the bodies which you call bodies, unless you would say that some arise from others rather than from their own? To these one might reply with the words of the divine Scripture: "You are mistaken, O men, not knowing the power of God," (Matt. 22:20) by whose will all things were constituted, whose will alone accomplishes the work intended, as has also been said before.

For what is easier than for what is not to bring into being the substances, or having been produced and mingled either with themselves or with others to separate them again, and to assign to each its own? For the last indeed we perform too, often separating artfully the wine that has been mixed with water. Moreover the sun draws from the sea the drinkable and sweet by means of the vapors and exhalations, and lets go the heavy and earthy and salty and bitter. And first this belongs to God alone, who is able to do all things whatever He wishes. If then God brought the non-being into being, how would it not be easy for him to separate again for himself the things mixed according to the elements, and to distribute the same to each body, even if this is impossible for men? For just as it is impossible for you and for me to separate the illuminating from the burning aspect of fire, but possible for God, for "the voice of the Lord has been said to cut off the flame of fire," (Ps. 29:7) so also the things that have been mingled are impossible for you and for me, but easy and effortless for God.

Now this marvelous assertion is presented to us by the present account of the Revelation, saying, "*The sea gave up the dead that were in it* from the sea." And this element of water signified every moist substance. The moist substance, then, he says, gave as much as was contained in it from the watery parts of human bodies.

And Death and Hades, he says, *gave up the dead who were in them*. Calling the earth "*death*" because our bodies are dissolved in it, therefore also the inspired prophet, by indirectness, calls death "earth of death," saying "and brought me down into the earth of death." (Ps. 21:16) Therefore the whole earth gave what in it was our earthly part. In addition, *Hades* gave up the dead who were in it, calling *Hades* the air and the fire because of their invisibility and imperceptibility. For the air, by its thinness, happens to be invisible unless it were thickened; and the fire that once dwelt in the woods is invisible, unless it were applied outwardly. Moreover, the element of fire, the ether, is invisible to us because it is darkened by the superaddition of much air. Or rather, he calls fire *Hades* because it imparts invisibility and imperceptibility to whatever it seizes; therefore many of the learned designate it as "invisible." When therefore each of the elements had given up as much as of the human composition was in them, the resurrection was affected.

When this had taken place, he says, *each was judged according to their deeds*. *And Death and Hades*, he says, *were cast into the lake of fire*; that is, the death and the immortal and incorporeal life of souls in the manner of death was taken away, once having been the resurrection and each soul receiving its own body; which, explaining more figuratively and hinting at their destruction, he said that *Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire*.

This is also what the prophet Hosea does, saying: "Where is your justice, O Death? Where is your sting, Hades?" (Hos. 13:14)

He says *the lake of fire, this is the second death*; for it has also been said above that the first death is the earthly death, the separation of soul and body, and the second is the spiritual death,[12] punishment and retribution, which has sin as its mother. But those who are said to have been in sins and are not worthy of the inscription in life have suffered equally. And if he said that those

who are in the middle of the sinners are cast into the *lake of fire* together with the Devil and the Antichrist, for he said this above, do not be surprised, for there too there is a varied punishment, just as with fever: one kind is burning and continuous, another is lesser and mild, even if all are called fevers; so likewise there you will perceive.

Translator's notes for chapter 20.

1. In ancient Greek thought, the transmigration of souls (μετενσωματώσεις) and the water of Lethe were key elements of a mystical, rather than atheistic, understanding of the afterlife, often linked to Orphism, Pythagoras, and Plato. While the general population feared a shadowy, permanent afterlife in Hades, these traditions offered a cycle of reincarnation where souls drank from the River Lethe to forget past lives before rebirth.

2. Oecumenius, in his commentary on 2 Peter 3:8 says concerning the thousand years, "but a thousand years are just like a single day with him. Or rather, according to David, there is no multiplication of days: for he says in this way: "A thousand years in your sight, O Lord, are like a day that has just gone by and like a watch in the night" (Ps. 89:4): by watch signifying the briefest span of the night. For the night is divided into four watches: since the Lord came to the holy apostles in the fourth watch. (Matt. 14:25)"

3. The word θεοσημείαις (plural: θεοσημείαι) derives from the words θεός and σημείον and means the signs sent by God. Specifically, the term refers to: Divine Signs: Extraordinary events or phenomena (natural or supernatural) that are interpreted as manifestations of divine will or as warnings from the deity. Miracles: In ecclesiastical terminology and in biblical texts, it is often used to describe miracles, that is, acts that demonstrate divine power and intervention.

4. Some of the Oecumenius manuscripts omit "The rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were completed."

5. The word "Paraclete" [Παράκλητος] comes from Greek and means "one who is called to someone's side" or "one who is called for help," functioning as advocate, mediator, helper, or comforter. In Christian

theology, it primarily refers to the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus promised to His disciples to guide them, comfort them, and give them strength.

6. Oecumenius, in his commentary on Hebrews 11:38 says, "*of whom the world was not worthy*." This also encourages them. For if this world was not worthy of those who suffer badly for the sake of God, that is, all people and this creation itself, why do you, he says, wish to receive the rewards here for the sufferings endured for Christ? For being better than the world, do not seek anything in this world.

7. “advocator” [ἱεροφάντης] Literally a teacher of religious rites and ceremonies, a high-priest, hierophant.

8. Here Oecumenius maintains the interpretation from Rev. 13 concerning Satan, the Beast coming out of the sea, that is, the Devil, and the Beast coming out of the earth, that is, the Antichrist/False Prophet.

9. Oecumenius, in his commentary on 2 Peter 3:10 says, The word “noise” indeed means sound. However, the sound of this kind is proper to fire in those things that are fed by fire. Note, however, that it has said the earth and what is in it must be burned up, but not men, but only destruction has been said concerning the wicked or their transgressions. For the way of the wicked will perish, but the wicked himself will not.

10. Chapter 10, Oecumenius describes the variations of the “scrolls” in Greek. I also provided a footnote concerning this in note 10:1.

11. Some Oecumenius manuscripts omitted “this is the second death.”

12. See his comments on Rev. 20:4-8.

CHAPTER 21

Revelation 21:1-5 ***And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying: behold, the tabernacle***

of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, their God; and he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more: the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said: behold, I make all things new. And he said: write; for these words are faithful and true.

And he says, *I saw new heavens and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and the sea is no more*. Peter says something similar in his second epistle, saying that "we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth." (2 Peter 3:13) But he does not say that the *heaven* and the *earth* and the *sea* have passed into annihilation and nonexistence, or that others have been created in their stead; rather, that those now existing have cast off their corruption and have become *new*, as one puts off an old and polluted garment and removes its filth. For everything is called *new* that was not such before but has now come into being.

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON 2 PETER 3:13
"According to his promise." For He promised the faithful, saying: "I will come and take you, etc. (Jn. 14:33) "In my Father's house there are many mansions." (Jn. 14:2) Therefore, Paul also says that, when the angel shall sound the trumpet from heaven, and the dead shall rise immortal (1 Thess. 4:15), they themselves will also meet the Lord in glory, signifying immortality by what he said about glory. But if they are immortal or incorruptible, surely they will also be ***new***. If, however, these are new, it is evident that a new creature has been born to be changed along with the establishment of men: corruptible indeed because of the corruptible downfall of men, but incorruptible because of the renewal of men. Consider, moreover, that both the delay of time until the Lord's coming and the long-suffering expectation itself are said to effect our salvation.

Then the creation will be made free from all corruption, which it has suffered through the transgression of men. And most

trustworthy witness of these things is the divine apostle writing to the Romans and saying these things concerning the creation: “for the creation eagerly awaits the revelation of the sons of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not by its own will but because of him who subjected it, with hope that the creation itself also will be liberated from the bondage of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.” (Rom. 8:19-21) And not only he but also the inspired prophet, singing concerning heaven and earth according to the testimony just cited: “and all of them shall be worn out as a garment, and like a mantle you will fold them up and they will be changed.” (Ps. 101:27)

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON ROMANS 8:19-21
" For the creation's eager expectation. " That is, the intense and vehement anticipation. He says it is like this: ***"Even the creation,"*** he says, ***"eagerly awaits the glory about to be revealed to us."*** Why? Because, he says, having been created incorruptible, through the sins of men it has become corruptible, since we too, from incorruptible, became corruptible. Therefore the creation desires, he says, to receive the incorruption of men (and this will be at the resurrection), so that it too may obtain its proper incorruption. For when the man through whom incorruption became corruptible obtains incorruption, the creation will share in receiving its proper incorruption. The entire passage is a personification, both to indicate the excess of blessings and to show, as it were, that we owe more diligence to strive to attain such glory and incorruption than does the creation. For do not suppose that the lifeless and insensible creation expects or perceives such things. ***“The revelation.”*** The end, when it is about to be revealed, who are sons of God and who are sons of the Devil. ***“For creation was subjected to futility.”*** That is, to corruption. For this was condemned because of our sins. ***“Not willingly, but because of him who subjected it in hope.”*** He says this is the work of Christ’s power, that even the things heard were subjected in hope. For it itself, he says, hopes for deliverance; therefore it was subjected in hope of deliverance. Then he explains to himself in what hope, that even creation itself will be set free. ***“For even creation itself will be set free from the bondage of corruption into the freedom of the glory.”*** Into freedom, that is, into the freedom of glory; that is, through us creation too will be incorruptible, just as through us it became corrupt.

And he says: *And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband*. By *Jerusalem* he associates the blessed end and dwelling of the saints, which having called *Jerusalem* figuratively both now and in the times to come he has adorned magnificently and fittingly, that from sensible things we may send our mind to the intelligible blessedness and conduct of the saints.

Was I not right in the above when I said that the vision calls the end of the holy ones and the dwelling there a figurative *Jerusalem*?

Behold, now it has revealed the riddle, saying, *Behold, the tent of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, their God*. The apostle made this clearer when he said later, "We who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord." (1 Thess. 4:17)

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON 1 THESSALONIANS 4:17
"*Then we who are alive*." After this he says, "both the living and those who are left, those who are worthy, together with those who have already died will be caught up." Therefore do not suppose that the dead will be raised with difficulty. For the catching up will be together. **"*On the clouds*."** On the vehicle of God. For even Christ was taken up by a cloud. If he is about to come, why then are the faithful seized? So that they may meet him, it is an honor. Just as when a king enters a city, some meet him with honor while the condemned remain inside awaiting the judge, so then the righteous are seized, while the sinners, even if they are believers, remain. **"*in the air*."** For through the clouds they will go into the air, that is, be taken up. **"*we shall always be with the Lord*."** Then he also states the crown of blessedness, to be with Christ always.

And he will wipe away every tear from their eyes. And Isaiah the prophet said a similar thing, saying "death was swallowed up in victory, and again God took away every tear from every face." (Isa. 25:8) For if according to the divine apostle in that blessed

Life of the Saints “pain and sorrow and groaning have fled away,” (Isa. 51:11) what kind of tear will remain for those who have escaped these things?

He says *the former things are passed away*. He says the suffering of the saints has reached an end. Now the mutual exchanges of pains are provided.

Behold, he says, *I make all things new*. For if the heavens and the earth and the sea are renewed, and moreover people themselves and the things of their joy and glory are new, not interrupted by tears or mourning or dishonor, then *all things* will be *new*. But do not think, O John, he says, that what is spoken and shown to you has some extravagant imagination or falsehood in magnitude; all things are faithful and true; therefore write them.

> **<u>Revelation 21:6-8</u>** ***And he said to me, “It has been done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give freely from the spring of the water of life. The one who conquers will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But for the cowardly[1], those who are unbelieving, detestable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”***

He says: *It has been done*! What has been done? These things, that is the things said, and nothing false about them. He put "*have been done*" instead of "they will happen."

He says: *I am the Alpha and the Omega; the beginning and the end*. Since he again takes up what was said earlier about him, we too, following him step by step, may again take up what we said before. *The Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end*, indicate God's lack of beginning and endlessness; for since

nothing in this life among us is without a beginning, he used "*beginning*" and "*end*" in place of "without beginning" and "without end."

He says: *To the thirsty I will give freely from the spring of the water of life*. In the Gospels the Lord says: "blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled." (Matt. 5:6) *To the thirsty I will give freely from the spring of the water of life*. And how, he says, *freely*, when the saints attain the coming life after many labors? Why then does he say to *give freely*? This signifies that nothing comparable to the goods of that time can ever be brought by a man, even if he labors ever so much; this is what the apostle suggesting said: "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory about to be revealed to us." (Rom. 8:18)

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON ROMANS 8:18
So that we may not be thought more careless about the whole of grace, it even requires what is denied us. For if, he says, we share in the sufferings, we shall also share in the good things. ***"The sufferings of the present time in view of the future glory."*** He indicates the briefness of the sufferings by "the present time." Then he shows the whole character of grace, since God conquers contrary powers, and that we are not strong enough to deserve to undergo or to attain anything of that future exchange. ***"To be revealed to us."*** Well said, "to be revealed." For it exists even now, but it is hidden.

The one who conquers, he says, *will inherit* both the passions and the evil beast, the Devil; *will inherit these things*. Therefore, *the one who conquers*.

But as for the cowardly and unbelieving and these and those, there will be a portion in the lake of fire. He calls *cowardly* those who are weak in every good work through voluntary misery.

And he says false to all liars. He did not say to the *liars* but to the false ones, that is, to those who act against nature and, having falsified the natural beauty of virtue, wear counterfeit faces of

depravity. And that that *fire* will be *the second death* has been said among those who have reached it.

> **<u>Revelation 21:9-14</u>** ***And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls that were full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying: Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God; her radiance was like a very precious stone, as a jasper stone, clear as crystal. She had a great and high wall, with twelve gates[2], and at the gates twelve angels, and names written, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel. From the east three gates, and from the north three gates, and from the south three gates, and from the west three gates[3]; and the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were twelve names, the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.***

And one of the seven angels came and said to me, who were these *seven* about which much was spoken in the earlier ones (Rev. 15-17):

Come, he says, *I will show you the bride of the Lamb*. He wishes to show "the church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven," (Heb. 12:23) which *Jerusalem* he also calls the heavenly; concerning which Paul spoke to the Hebrews, saying, "For you have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire, and to darkness and gloom and a storm, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, which those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them. For they could not bear what was commanded. Even if a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned, or shot through with an arrow. And

so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I am exceedingly afraid and trembling. But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem, and to multitudes of angels, to the festive gathering and assembly of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, and to God the judge of all." (Heb. 12:18-23)[4] Through the assembly or church of all the saints and through the heavenly *Jerusalem* the word depicts the blessedness of the saints, and the life they shall have in God and with God, as it has been said, adorning it bodily and gloriously, and leading our mind into a spiritual glory and brightness.

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS 12:18-23
There is fire, for this reason, that God may appear more fearsome to those who were delivering the law. ***"And to darkness and gloom."*** Darkness and gloom signify the shadow of the Old Testament. For if those were figures, it is evident that until the truth came, the figures were obscure, while it was not known what they signified. Moreover, darkness also signifies the invisibility of God. "and to darkness," he says, "under his feet." (Ps. 17:10) ***"and a storm."*** By the word, storm, he excites them when they were sluggish. Indeed, the storm is a twisting of the wind. And the trumpet, however, as if in the presence of the king; for this will be in the second coming. ***"and the voice of words."*** For Moses spoke, and God answered. Indeed, it was necessary for the voice of God to be formed (Ex. 19:19), so that the lawgiving would be worthy of faith, and it would not be thought to be from Moses, through whom God was about to bring the law. ***"For they could not bear what was commanded."*** He stated the reason for the excuse, because they could not bear what was being defined, that is, what was being commanded or said. Indeed, they said to Moses: "Speak to us, and let not God speak to us." (Ex. 20:19) ***"Even if a beast touched the mountain."*** Such was the terror that if the beast touched the mountain, it was stoned. ***"And so terrifying was the sight."*** It wishes to show that the New Testament also excels in relation to the Old. For indeed, even if the Old had nothing of this kind that the New has, it was to be feared in some way; however, the New, having perfection, is gentle and without terror. ***"that Moses said, "I am exceedingly afraid and trembling."*** This was also said by the one who was about to enter into darkness. ***"But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem, and to multitudes of angels."*** Instead of the people of Judah, angels are present. And he says there is a festive gathering among the multitude of angels. He also speaks of the firstborn, the faithful, whose names are written in the book of life. For this is what the Lord also says

to the disciples: “Rejoice because your names are written in heaven." (Luke 10:20)
He calls the firstborn holy, who have something excellent beyond other faithful ones who have received adoption from the firstborn who are among us, who by the right of the firstborn have some special birthrights.
"and to God the judge of all." As if he were saying: They did not even dare to listen to the word; but you, on the other hand, have approached the very judge, that is, Christ. "For the Father," he says, "does not judge anyone, but has given all judgment to the Son." (In. 5:22)

Therefore, from that state. “*And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God*.” For without spiritual grace no human mind could ever be exalted so as to enter into the perception of the glory of the saints. And fittingly the church, and likewise the life of the righteous and the state; there also was *a great and high mountain*; for nothing lowly or close to the ground or prostrate was among them, but all things were high and uplifted. For it is written concerning them that “the mighty ones of the earth were greatly exalted by God.” (Ps. 46:10)

Her radiance, that is, the Sun of righteousness Christ (Ma. 4:2), is said to be like *a jasper stone*. The *jasper*, as was said above, being somewhat green, signifies the life-giving and life-sustaining Christ, “who opens his hand and fills every living thing with good will” (Ps. 145:16); for green is considered the source of all earthly food. But the jasper was also *clear as crystal*, showing the purity and holiness of Christ; “for he committed no sin, and deceit was not found in his mouth,” (Isa. 53:9) according to the prophecies of Isaiah. And Christ again is the wall of the saints, that is, of his church, being our bulwark and defense and help.

He says that it has *twelve gates*, by which he alludes to the divine apostles who proclaimed to us the entrance into faith in Christ. And on the *gates are twelve angels*; for I am persuaded that they

co-operated with the holy apostles, and that divine angels aided the faith of the world; for if the law given through Moses was spoken by angels, as the apostle says; "if the word spoken through angels proved unwavering," (Heb. 2:2)[5] how much more did the evangelic proclamation have angels cooperating?

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS 2:2
"The word spoken through angels." Either Paul speaks of the law as having been given through angels, as he also says in the Epistle to the Galatians: "Ordained through angels," (Gal. 3:19) or administered; or of those things which were said to others by angels: as concerning the Sodomites (Gen. 19:1), as concerning the lamentation in the book of Judges (2:1), when the angel of the Lord came to the Israelites and reproached them for their transgression. "It was necessary," he said, "to remove all these nations from the midst, but you also made treaties with them: therefore the Lord will not destroy the nations that have been left behind." Upon hearing this, they all wept with one heart: therefore, the place was called the Place of Weeping. But he says, this is of such a nature. For if those things predicted by angels have happened and have come to pass, how much more will those things predicted by the Son of God happen?

And he says, *and names written, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel*. *Israel* is indeed sensibly[6] [αἰσθητῶς] those born of Jacob the patriarch; but spiritually it is those who conform to the faith of our father Abraham. And to this the apostle, called "father of those by circumcision not only but also of those who follow the footsteps of the faith of our father Abraham," (Rom. 4:12) bears witness;

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON ROMANS 4:12
"Not only for those in the uncircumcision." For just as those in foreskin would not thereby alone claim Abraham as father, because he trusted while in uncircumcision, unless they also imitated his faith; so neither do those in circumcision obtain Abraham merely by being circumcised, unless they also imitate his faith. It is therefore clear that the Jews will fall away from kinship with Abraham if they do not believe. ***"But to those who walk in the steps."*** To those who are persuaded, who remain. ***"In the footsteps of faith."*** In imitation, in likeness. Tracks are called the marks and signs of the advancing feet. Since these are later, he says fittingly and appropriately to those who remain and follow the footsteps, that is, walking according to his traces and

his way, which existed without circumcision. ***"Which was in the uncircumcision."*** He again reminds that he believed while uncircumcised, and was later circumcised.

For Israel is interpreted as "the mind seeing God[7]," that is, discerning. And which of the faithful more than these perceived God, or have become discerning by the abundant working of the Spirit? Therefore *the names* of these *are written on the gates of the city*. And *the twelve tribes* indicate the fullness of the faithful; for having once called the faithful *Israel*, he has also adhered to the number of their fullness, saying *twelve tribes*, and he says that from the four quarters of the world there were *three* at each gate. For the glorious apostles wholly took up a triad, proclaiming it consubstantial to the nations, and "baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (Matt. 28:10)

And the wall of the city, he says, *had twelve foundations*; for Christ, whom we have thought of as a wall, rests upon the preaching of the apostles, and upon them has gone forth as a "chief cornerstone," (1 Peter 2:6; Isa. 28:16; Eph. 2:20) as it is written.

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON 1 PETER 2:6

For ***when you have tasted***, that is, when you have progressed through the practice of the sacred commandments according to the Gospel, you have recognized the sweetness of the doctrine by sense: for sense is more effective than any word for knowledge, since that which reaches experience is more pleasing than any word. Therefore, as you ***have tasted the Lord is good,*** show the goodness of sweetness to others, and apply yourselves to Him ***as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and honorable***, who has also been proclaimed through the prophets: being bound to one another in love, and being fitted together for the completion of ***a spiritual house,*** having no care for contempt among men: for neither did Christ, the ***cornerstone***, have that care, who was rejected by them: and being built up and perfected into a ***spiritual house*** by yourselves, demonstrating ***a holy priesthood***, offer spiritual sacrifices, which are far more ***acceptable to God*** than sacrifices lacking reason. For you cannot, without a firm bond of mutual love, offer pure sacrifices to God. For it is said: "Lifting up holy hands without anger and disputes." (1 Tim. 2:8) For how can one who strives to unite

himself with God through prayer achieve this, while separating himself from his brother through anger and wicked disputes?

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON EPHESIANS 2:20

"Indeed the cornerstone." For he is the one who binds and tightens both the foundation and the building. And see, sometimes it says he tightens it from above, where it calls him the head; at other times from below, as with regard to the cornerstone; elsewhere it calls Christ the foundation. ***"In whom all...***" In whom is the cornerstone.

And upon them, that is, upon those *foundations*, are *twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb*. He has barely revealed the riddle, plainly saying that he calls the *apostles* the *gates* and *foundations* of the holy *city* of the church; by whose teaching may we all abide, turning away from the profane babblings of the false knowledge of heretics; by the grace of Christ our teacher and chief shepherd; to whom be glory forever. Amen.

[Twelfth Discourse]

Moreover, concerning the holy city, the heavenly Jerusalem, there is an account by the divine evangelist of its size and measure and adornment and other arrangement. And he says that,

> **Revelation 21:15-22** ***The one who spoke with me had a golden reed to measure the city and its gates and its wall. And the city lies foursquare, and its length is equal to its breadth, and its height is equal. And he measured the city with the reed at twelve thousand stadia; its length and its breadth and its height are equal. And he measured its wall a hundred and forty-four cubits of a man, which is an angel. And the material of its wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. And the foundations of the***

wall of the city were adorned with every kind of precious stone: the first foundation jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony[8], the fourth emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh hyacinth, the twelfth amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each single gate was of one pearl; and the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. And I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

The *reed* with which he measured the holy *city* was geometric; and it was *golden* because of the preciousness of both the measuring *angel* and the *city* being measured. And the *city*, it says, lies *foursquare, and its length, its breadth, and its height are equal*. The *foursquare* shape, as it seems to those skilled in these matters, is and is called a cube; for there is also a plane square; but when it is both square and equilateral in all dimensions, they say the cube signifies stability; for the good things of the saints are permanent and unchangeable, with no transformation corrupting their blessedness. The greatness of the city reveals both the magnificence of the saints and that, even if they are far surpassed in number by the sinners, nevertheless they themselves are not few in number, but are such as to fill so great a city.

And he measured, says, *its wall at a thousand and four hundred cubits by the measure of a man, which is that of an angel*. In many places, according to the customary usage of the divine Scripture, men are called angels. And this is clear from those passages in which Gabriel the Archangel is interpreted as a man of God (see Dan. 9:21). And the prophet said, "You will save men and beasts, O Lord" (Ps. 36:6): men indeed are called angels, beasts the men; for despite the mind of the angels we men happen to be irrational and brute. For he did not say "men and beasts" so that one might be proud, meaning true men and real beasts; for it was said to the

apostle about the beasts, “Is God concerned with oxen?” (1 Cor. 9:9) Therefore the things called beasts by the prophet must be understood as men, and those called men as angels.

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON 1 CORINTHIANS 9:9
"Is God concerned with oxen?" So that no one may say, "And what concern has that to do with the preceding matter about the oxen?" he says, "Is God concerned with oxen?" For he is indeed concerned even about animals, but not in the sense of establishing a law for them. Rather from this he wishes to discipline us: that those who toil should not toil in vain, but should be nourished from their labors.

But the Lord also, according to Luke, called men angels, saying, "Let your loins be girded and your lamps burning, and you likewise are like men awaiting their Lord, when he will be released from the wedding.” (Luke 12:35-36) Since therefore in many respects men are called angels from above; and they have eyes toward God. For this reason he says here a measure of *man which is an angel*. The saying hints that the divine is altogether incomprehensible, for we have conceived Christ as a wall of the city in the things before, and still more by contemplation of the majesty of God men become angels.

Therefore the *wall* of the city was measured by an angelic rod and not by a human one. And the secret who is to have the number of the rods is by the wisdom of the angels, who also measured it knowingly.

And he says that the inner structure of its wall is *jasper*. Already we have received jasper as the symbol of the incorruptible and life-giving Christ.

And he says *the city is pure gold*, *like clear glass*. The *gold* is arranged with brilliance and transparency. The precious and purity of the saints is presented in works and words.

And he says *the foundations of the wall of that city are adorned with every precious stone*. As for the foundation of the wall, the

Lord is a *wall*, as has been said many times. We have spoken of the holy apostles in the foregoing. As though Christ rests in their teaching and has mounted upon them according to the promise given, in which he also says, "and behold, I am with you all the days until the end of the age." (Matt. 28:20) Therefore these are the *foundations*, that is, the apostles, in every excellence; for the precious stones denote excellence, they are *adorned*; for by deed they became pure through the preaching and through the struggles for Christ and by their favorable nature toward him even unto blood. And if anyone will wish to be precise even about the stones, such a kind of vision may be found, but a little from above will be enough. The high priests according to the law of Moses were variously attired with a kind of tunic and a shoulder-covering and a mitre and a breastplate, girded and surrounded by other things (see Ex. 29:5-6), both awe and astonishment, moreover exhibiting a secret symbolism through their form. And among them was also the saying of judgment (see Ex. 28:15), which was carried upon the shoulder-covering by a woven work in various fashion. The form of the saying was a double breastplate, a small and square thing (Ex. 28:16), in which twelve stones were set in four rows with the names of the sons of Israel; some of these stones indeed were also placed in the *foundations of the wall* there, others were corner-stones and not placed in those. For in the breastplate of judgments there are borne eight stones corresponding to the foundations there: jacinth; sapphire; emerald; sardius; chrysolite; beryl; topaz; amethyst; and four of the stones in the foundations are not numbered with those in the breastplate of judgment. They are these: sardonyx; chrysoprase; hyacinth.

And there were also the *gates* of the *city*, which we likewise received as the apostles, *each one from a single pearl*. Therefore the pearl is now set as new, not itself numbered among the stones of the list, and it is possible to see that the newly named ones are rather more valuable than those placed in the list in the old book;

by which is indicated that the holy apostles have knowledge of the Old Covenant and approve of the decrees established in that, and the wise apostle could say, "having been made righteous according to the law, I am blameless" (Philip. 3:6) and also approved in the precepts of the New Covenant, and that its knowledge has been enriched, which was much clearer and somewhat more precious than the knowledge in the Old, if indeed the things in the law were a shadow, and the things in the New were truth; for this is hinted by the mingling set forth: both the precious stones of the Old and the New are in the foundations of the city, which, as has been said, testify to the apostles.

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON PHILIPPIANS 3:6
"Out of zeal." For one may be a Pharisee, yet not a zealot. ***According to the righteousness in the law.*** Since the Jews also persecuted the Church, not out of zeal for God but out of love of authority, and this is evident. For he who is blameless according to the righteousness in the law, how would he be about to persecute out of love of authority and not out of zeal for God?

And this is what the Lord said in the Gospels: "therefore every scribe instructed in the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure new things and old." (Matt. 13:52) And he says that the gates of the city, which we have likewise conceived in describing the apostles who arrived, each one is made of a single pearl, their preciousness being pure and bright, as they are described.

And the street of the city, he says, *was pure gold, like transparent glass*. It has been said that gold and the purity and transparency of glass signify the precious and refined aspect of the holy life.

And he says *I saw no temple in it; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple*. For what need is there of a temple when He is present and in a certain sense cohabiting with the saints of God and is seen face to face as far as possible? For the divine

apostle called the present knowledge of God "through a mirror and in a riddle"; but the future, "face to face." (1 Cor. 13:12)

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON 1 CORINTHIANS 13:12
"For we see now, he says, through a mirror." Then, since a mirror shows a more indistinct imitation of what is displayed, he added, ***"In a riddle,"*** indicating that the knowledge now thought most perfect is more dim, and likewise the thing that is made visible in a mirror. ***"Face to face."*** Not that the Divine has any bodily or sensible face, but he sets the word "face" spiritually to denote a clearer and more distinct knowledge. I take him to mean this concerning the Son and our Lord Jesus Christ. ***"Then shall I know."*** Now, he says, I know him in part; then shall I know and long for him even as he has now known me. For now we do not know him, but he both knew and drew us to himself. For then we shall also know him and hasten toward him, receiving a more visible experience of his sweetness. Having said this, he removes from them the pride in their knowledge, showing the present knowledge to be partial, and that this knowledge itself is not from us but a gift to us from God, and apart from our labors. For he, he says, knew us and drew us to himself. ***"Even as I was known."*** Instead of "I was known," meaning precisely and completely. For on this account, he says, I too was known at the beginning, that I might know him also, as far as it is possible for a human, completely and precisely the Master who knew me.

But naturally one might ask, what then? We have already invoked God the Almighty, and the Father of the Lord and of the Lamb, the Son of God; shall we not also recall the Holy Spirit? One must say to him: saying, "O this one," *the Lord* and *God* named the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, for God did so; and again saying, "*the Lord God Almighty*," he signified the Holy Trinity by the three names. But someone might also ask this: why, then, having been reminded of the venerable Trinity by the saying "*the Lord God Almighty are its temple*," is the *Lamb*, who is Christ, counted to us from the outside, so that we should no longer conceive a Trinity? May it not be so, I should say to him. For we are not taught so, but a memory is borne of both the Holy Trinity and of the *Lamb*, the sense of the statement signifying that the one who was incarnate is of the Holy Trinity, and that after the flesh the Son fills the Holy Trinity and is not now in heaven separated from

the flesh. For he indicated the Son incarnate by periphrasis both by "God who is the Son," and by "*the Lamb*," which again is the same Christ incarnate, consubstantial with us and enlivened intelligibly; in whom the Word is united to the particular flesh according to hypostasis.

<u>Revelation 21:23-25</u> ***And the city needs neither sun nor moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has lit it, and its lamp is the Lamb. And the nations will walk by its light; and the kings of the earth will bring their glory and honor into it; and its gates shall not be shut by day; for there will be no night there.***

And the city, it says, has no need of the *sun*. For they enjoy the *light* of the divine and spiritual. For in that time the saints perceive, at the end of the spiritual things, no need of sensible light.

And it says *the nations will walk by its light*. Not only the *nations*, but also the saints from Israel who have believed. But since those from the Gentiles are more numerous, it indicated these as well as those from the greater number.

And the kings of the earth will bring their glory and honor into it. He calls all the saints *kings of the earth*, concerning whom it is written in the passage appointing "the heavenly kings over it, they shall be whitened in Selmon," (Ps. 67:15) as was said before. These therefore have even glorious and honorable status. And he says: the boastings borne of virtue will be laid up in that holy city, as he said that the goods of virtue dwell together with the saints.

And its gates he says *shall not be shut by day*. The meaning is twofold: for either this says that there will be peace and absence of fear, such that there will be no need to keep watch over the city by day or to bar the doors ever, or that the apostolic teachings, for

we called the apostles *gates*, will not be silenced even there, but the apostles will be present there as teachers of new doctrines and of more divine things to the saints; for the righteous are "children of day and light," (1 Thess. 5:5) they will delight in divine and illuminating praises and mysteries, light ever being about them and a divine shining of light.

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON 1 THESSALONIANS 5:5
"You are children of light." For as those who perform deeds worthy of Gehenna are called children of Gehenna, and the disobedient are called children of disobedience, so too are those who do just and enlightened deeds called children of light and of day. We are not of the night, that is, children of sin

For he says *there will be no night there*. For if the divine radiance were ever interrupted, then there would be night; but if it is impious to say this, that the divine light ever ceases, how could there be night for the saints?

Revelation 21:26-27 ***And they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. and nothing unclean and no one who practices abomination and falsehood shall ever enter it, but those who are written in the book of life of the Lamb.***

Glory and honor of the nations, that which is brought into the holy city, in an indirectness he said those who among the Gentiles have become esteemed and have behaved worthy of life; for these shall be carried into the heavenly Jerusalem and shall dwell together with the saints therein.

And he says that *and nothing unclean and no one who practices abomination and falsehood shall ever enter it, but those who are written in the book of life of the Lamb*. "For what fellowship has light with darkness," (1 Cor. 6:14) or a sinner with the righteous

of God? whom the Lord in the Gospels also delivered to us as separated by a great chasm. (see Luke 16:26)

Translator's notes for chapter 21.

1. The oldest Oecumenius manuscript reads "But for the rest [λοιποῖς]." But manuscripts 203 and 240 have the correct reading "cowardly [δειλοῖς]". Oecumenius uses the word "cowardly [δειλοῖς]" in his comments below.

2. The oldest Oecumenius manuscript reads "fifteen." Manuscripts 203 and 240 have "twelve", which is the correct reading. Oecumenius also has "twelve" in the comments below.

3. The oldest Oecumenius manuscript omits "and from the west three gates." Manuscripts 203 and 240 has that reading.

4. Oecumenius, in his commentary on the epistle to the Hebrews reads… There is fire, for this reason, that God may appear more fearsome to those who were delivering the law. "*And to darkness and gloom*." *Darkness and gloom* signify the shadow of the Old Testament. For if those were figures, it is evident that until the truth came, the figures were obscure, while it was not known what they signified. Moreover, *darkness* also signifies the invisibility of God. "*and to darkness*," he says, "under his feet." (Ps. 17:10)

"*and a storm*." By the word, storm, he excites them when they were sluggish. Indeed, the storm is a twisting of the wind.

And the *trumpet*, however, as if in the presence of the king; for this will be in the second coming.

"*and the voice of words*." For Moses spoke, and God answered. Indeed, it was necessary for *the voice* of God to be formed (Ex. 19:19), so that the lawgiving would be worthy of faith, and it would not be thought to be from Moses, through whom God was about to bring the law.

"*For they could not bear what was commanded*." He stated the reason for the excuse, because they could not bear what was being defined, that is, what was being commanded or said. Indeed, they said to Moses: "Speak to us, and let not God speak to us." (Ex. 20:19)

"*Even if a beast touched the mountain*." Such was the terror that if the beast touched the mountain, it was stoned.

"*And so terrifying was the sight*." It wishes to show that the New Testament also excels in relation to the Old. For indeed, even if the Old had nothing of this kind that the New has, it was to be feared in some way; however, the New, having perfection, is gentle and without terror.

"*that Moses said, "I am exceedingly afraid and trembling*.." This was also said by the one who was about to enter into darkness…."*But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem, and to multitudes of angels*." Instead of the people of Judah, angels are present. And he says there is a *festive gathering* among the *multitude of angels*. He also speaks *of the firstborn*, the faithful, whose names are written in the book of life. For this is what the Lord also says to the disciples: “Rejoice because your names are written in heaven." (Luke 10:20)

— [OECUMENIUS] He calls the *firstborn* holy, who have something excellent beyond other faithful ones who have received adoption from the firstborn who are among us, who by the right of the firstborn have some special birthrights. [*end of the Oecumenius excerpt*] —

"*and to God the judge of all*." As if he were saying: They did not even dare to listen to the word; but you, on the other hand, have approached the very judge, that is, Christ. "For the Father," he says, "does not judge anyone, but has given all judgment to the Son." (Jn. 5:22)

5. Oecumenius makes a very similar statement in his commentary on Hebrews 2:2, saying, “But he says, this is of such a nature. For if those things predicted by angels have happened and have come to pass, how much more will those things predicted by the Son of God happen??

6. αἰσθητῶς is an adverb in Ancient and Koine Greek that means perceptibly, sensibly, or in a manner that can be perceived by the senses.

7. The interpretation of "Israel" as "the mind seeing God" (Greek: nous horōn theon) is a specific theological interpretation, particularly by Early Church Fathers like Origen, suggesting a spiritual, not just physical, people who have spiritual insight, contrasting with earthly wisdom, even though the common biblical name origin is from Jacob's wrestling with God ("struggled with God and prevailed").

8. The oldest Oecumenius manuscript reads καρχηδών, but Oecumenius manuscripts 203 and 240 have the correct reading χαλκηδών.

CHAPTER 22

Revelation 22:1-5 ***And he showed me a river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb in the midst of its square; and on this side of the river and on that were trees of life bearing twelve kinds of fruit, each month yielding its fruit; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall worship him; and they shall see his face, and his name shall be on their foreheads; and night shall be no more, and they will have no need of the light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will illuminate them, and they will reign for ever and ever. Amen.***

And he showed me, he says, *a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb in the midst of the city's square*. The *river of life* would be the abundant and rich gifts of Christ, which are continually poured out to the saints, as it were borne and flowing to them like a river. And of the *river* he says that on this side and on that side there was a tree of life bearing fruit each month. The Lord calls the tree of life, according to what is written by the Proverbs writer concerning wisdom; he says "the tree of life is for all who hold fast to it." (Prov. 3:18) But Paul handed over to us "Christ as God's power and God's wisdom." (1 Cor. 1:24) And he says that not only do the saints possess the riches of Christ's gifts, but they also have and share in him dwelling within them; which is the head of the highest blessedness. But the *tree of life* is continuous, Christ, and

unceasingly brings to completion fruits and gifts to the saints, as if to overtake zeal with zeal and lest they ever be deprived of divine flow.

And he says *the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations*. *Leaves of life* are the patriarchs attached to Christ and holding him, prophets, apostles, evangelists, martyrs and confessors, and those who in due times officiate at the gospel and pastors of the church, and every righteous soul; who even now heal souls, and to the saints will be an addition of good things.

And he says *there will be no more curse*. For although the anathemas now may flee vehemently, nevertheless we are comforted in them, with myriad excuses sprouting up in us in knowledge and indeed in ignorance; but then the saints will be free from every stain of the soul, just as they are from physical stain.

And he says that in the city will be the kingdom *of God*. For this is *the throne*. And he says the saints will serve him with *worship* not burdensome, but with spiritual pleasure and joy. And this will come from seeing *his face*; for he says *they shall see his face*; and they will see, insofar as is attainable by human nature, even *his name upon their foreheads*. The present passage plainly signifies the unceasing remembrance and communion of God. For as God is ever present and inscribed upon them, so he will always be with the saints. And it is clear, and from what Paul said: "and we shall always be with the Lord." (1 Thess. 4:17)

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON 1 THESSALONIANS 4:17
"we shall always be with the Lord." Then he also states the crown of blessedness, to be with Christ always.

But he says *there is no night*, in order that the saints may not need *the sun or lamp-light for illumination*, the divine light making their illumination uninterrupted. And the saints *will reign*, evidently *for ever and ever*. And these things indeed the most wise

Daniel testifies, saying also: "The saints of the Most High will receive and possess the kingdom, and they will rule in it forever and ever." (Dan. 7:18)

> **Revelation 22:6-9** ***And he said to me: "These words are faithful and true, and the Lord of the spirits of the prophets has sent his angel to show his servants the things which must shortly take place. Behold, I come quickly. Blessed are those who keep the words of the prophecy of this book." And John heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things. And he says: "See that you do not do that; I am your fellow servant and of your brothers the prophets and of those who keep the words of this book, worship God."***

These words, he says, *are faithful*, that is, *true*. *And the Lord is the spirit of the prophets*. He says "*spirits of prophets*" to mean the prophetic gifts, according to what was said to the most wise Paul. And "the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets," (1 Cor. 14:32) and to the divine prophet Isaiah: "Because of your fear, O Lord, we conceived in the womb and we travailed; and we bore the spirit of your salvation, which you made upon the earth." (Isa. 26:18)

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON 1 CORINTHIANS 14:32
"And the spirits of prophets are subject to the prophets." He says "the spirits of prophets," meaning the spiritual gift itself. Then lest anyone say, And how can I keep silent? for the very inspiring Holy Spirit compels one to speak even against his will, Not so, he says. For the gift is subordinated to the prophet, that is, in him it is both to speak and to be silent.

He says *to show his servants the things which must shortly take place*. For through John and his writings all things that were

shown to him have been learned. And he rightly said "*shortly*," for every time is short, as was said before, even if some appear to be especially great, when compared with the coming unending ages.

For this reason he also brought it on: "*Behold, I come quickly*." *Blessed are those who keep these things of this prophecy*. For those who keep them take pains not to fall under the punishments foretold in it through a God-beloved life.

And when he says *I heard and saw*, *I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel*. These things are interpreted in those that have arrived, when we also have demonstrated that the doctrines of the atheistic Greeks about their national leaders have nothing in common with the purest doctrines of the church.

> **Revelation 22:10-14** ***And he said to me: do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. Let the unjust continue to do injustice still, and the filthy be filthy still, and the righteous continue to do righteousness still, and the holy be holy still. Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give to every one according as his work shall be. I am the alpha and the omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city.***

Do not seal, he says, these *words*, that is, do not keep them to yourself, nor lock them away and guard them in the treasury of your mind, but reveal them to all.

For he says *the time is near*. He speaks something like this: the time until their fulfillment is not very long, as before. But do not think it necessary that they be heard now; for it is not personal, as if their omission were unnecessary. For what need is there of

exhortation to those who are from now tried by evils or by goods? For it is by deeds, not by untimely words, that those learning by action are instructed. But what does he mean by saying *the time is near*, neither long to come nor already present?

He says, *let the unjust continue to do injustice still, and the filthy be filthy still*. He does not command or order that they be unjust or *be filthy*, but says this: a little more time is still allowed to men; therefore let each one act as he pleases, and use his own free will as he wishes, whether for evil or for good. Therefore he further enjoins *the righteous to continue to do righteousness, and the holy be holy still*.

Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give to every one according as his work shall be. "*I come*," says the Lord, in the second coming, bringing with me what each must be repaid, whether good or evil.

I am, he says, *the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end*. These things have been sufficiently said above; therefore now pass on.

Blessed, he says, *are they that wash their robes, that they may have right to the tree of life*. By *robes* he means the bodies. Blessed therefore are those who live well and cleanse themselves from every filth of sin; for those who so live will have authority to recline upon *the tree of life* and to rest upon it, the Lord is *the tree of life*, as was said before.

And they may enter the city through the gates. And through the *gates*, that is, through the apostolic dogmas and teachings, they become partakers of the conduct and blessedness of the saints.

Revelation 22:15-19 ***Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the sexually immoral and the murderers***

and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. I, Jesus, sent my angel to testify to you about these things to the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star. And the Spirit[1] and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life as a gift. I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.

Outside are the dogs, he says. It is customary in the divine writing to call *dogs* those who associate with others because of their shamelessness and uncleanness. For Moses also says in Deuteronomy, the law of the advocator[2]: "You shall not bring the hire of a prostitute or the wages of a dog into the house of the Lord your God for any vow of yours." (Deut. 23:18) And since such persons are like dogs in their shamelessness, one of the philosophers outside also testifies, saying likewise: "Flee from every murder and the beds of a woman's adultery;"[3] and oaths of the blessed and shameless couches of youths. Therefore the dogs are outside the holy city and the conduct with the righteous, these and those. For what fellowship have they with the righteous of God?

And everyone who loves and practices falsehood, he says will be outside. *Falsehood* is everything contrary to nature; for since virtue is according to nature, because the Maker originally implanted in our nature the seed of virtue, wickedness is contrary to nature. Just as in bodies health is according to nature and disease contrary to nature, and sight and hearing are according to nature while blindness and deafness are contrary to nature, so in

souls virtue is according to nature and wickedness contrary to nature; for health is parallel to virtue, and disease to wickedness. And in this respect wickedness is *falsehood*, because it often pretends to be virtue; for boldness is fashioned to appear as courage, wickedness as prudence, sloth as temperance, and baseness as justice. For all these are vices assuming the guise of virtue, and so he casts out of the divine precincts those who practice the *falsehood* of wickedness.

I, Jesus, he says, have *sent my angel to testify to you about these things to the churches*. He says that to bear witness is not to do so in secret or in a private whisper, but before the congregations everywhere, so that no one, pretending ignorance, might be wicked through willing misconduct.

He says that *I am the root and the offspring of David*, although with regard to what appears it would be more accurate to say, I am the shoot sprung from the root of David. But now, on the contrary, he has called himself *the root of David*, and not only *root* but also *offspring*, as has been said above. *Root* indeed and cause of all things, among which is *David*, insofar as God is what he is understood to be; and *offspring* truly of *David* and having sprung from him according to the flesh, insofar as man is what he is understood to be. As to his being himself, for it is not tedious for me to say the same things often, and it is safe for those who encounter them, as the divine apostle in some of his discourses says. (see Philip. 3:1) Therefore since "Emmanuel" exists in both deity and humanity fully possessing each of the natures according to their proper principle, unconfused, unchangeably, indivisibly, incomprehensibly, and after the ineffable union we are persuaded that there is one person and one hypostasis and one operation, even if the distinction of the natures be not ignored, from which we say the ineffable union has been accomplished, not the natural property according to quality[4], as in the discourses of our inspired father Cyril[5].

The star, he says, *is the morning*; either he means the sun, since the sun is also called the sun of righteousness in Malachi, (Mal. 4:2) and moreover "fire fell upon them" that sang to the prophet, that is, upon the chief priests of the Jews and they "did not see the sun," (Ps. 57:9) namely the sun of righteousness Christ, or he means the morning star. For this is also called to Peter[6] in the Second Epistle, saying, "until the day approaches and the morning star rises in your hearts." (2 Peter 1:19)

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON 2 PETER 1:19
Therefore, ***as day approaches*** (I speak of the presence of things), you will have ***the Morning Star*** rising in your hearts: that is, the knowledge of Christ, or his presence and coming foretold by the prophets, illuminating your hearts like true light.

And he says *the Spirit*, that is, the prophetic spirit, *and the bride*, the universal and the church everywhere, say *Come*. For we have been commanded to seek the second coming of the Lord, but also to place it in prayer; for he who says, "Your kingdom come," (Matt. 6:10) asks of God the kingdom of Christ, which is the kingdom of the Father and of the Spirit.

And let the one who hears say, Come. And everyone, he says, hearing the words present, and you, John, make prayer for the coming of the kingdom of Christ. He says this, urging all to works and practices of righteousness; for no one, not having righteousness firmly established in himself, would make prayer for the coming of Christ, in which he will be demanded an account of the words in which he lived.

And he who thirsts, he says, *let him come*; let him who wills take the free *gift of the water of life*; and in how long the time will come of my presence, says the Lord, to the fountain of life, to the practice of virtue affix your mouth. "And all of you who have no money, come, buy, and drink without money and without price."

(Isa. 55:1) Isaiah admonishes us, prophesying the same things beforehand to the Lord.

And it has also been said in the passages that one receives the *gift* of virtue's reward after enduring sweats and toils, since "the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to be revealed to us, (Rom. 8:18) according to the words of Paul the most wise.

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON ROMANS 8:18
So that we may not be thought more careless about the whole of grace, it even requires what is denied us. For if, he says, we share in the sufferings, we shall also share in the good things. ***"The sufferings of the present time in view of the future glory."*** He indicates the briefness of the sufferings by "the present time." Then he shows the whole character of grace, since God conquers contrary powers, and that we are not strong enough to deserve to undergo or to attain anything of that future exchange. ***"To be revealed to us."*** Well said, "to be revealed." For it exists even now, but it is hidden.

I testify, he says, *to everyone who hears* these present *words*; that is, I bear witness not to add anything, lest he bring upon himself the blows spoken here, *nor to take away*, so that the portion of the *tree of life* and of the inscribed *holy city* be not removed; both of which are contained in this little *book*. Then the evangelist makes his own account credible and reverent; see what he has added:

<u>Revelation 22:20a</u> ***He who bear witness to these things, yes, I come quickly.***

Which Paul made when he said, "for I am already being poured out, and the time of my departure has come" (2 Tim. 4:6); this he himself now says also, he who teaches these things, I say and *bear witness* in them, and so I am from now at the ends of the present life, that the word may be left in suspicion by no one.

OECUMENIUS COMMENTARY ON 2 TIMOTHY 4:6

The meaning of ***"being am poured out"*** is, as it were, that I break the war against all. Neither fighting nor being fought against, for I am perfected. ***of my departure.*** For departure means death, either because of the departing from the earth from which we were taken; or towards the Creator Christ.

For who would choose among those who happen to be, if not then John so great, to devise words as from God, insofar as he was not yet about to undergo common death, and to depart into the hands of God more obviously than those who were formerly still living? I therefore write these things, saying alone to the one who calls me Christ regarding my departure, *Yes: I come quickly*.

Revelation 22:20b ***Amen. Come, Lord Jesus*.**

Since in the cases that have occurred the prophetic Spirit said to him, and the hearer says, "Tell the Lord, '*Come*,'" obeying the things revealed to him, he says, "*Amen: Come, Lord Jesus*"; therefore he used to say, "Yes, Master Christ, hasten for us your salvation and your second coming."

Revelation 22:21 ***The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints. Amen*.**

For the profane have already been shut out from the conduct of the holy and from entrance into the spiritual Jerusalem. But how could *the grace* of Christ our God come upon those who have been proclaimed? Make us partakers of it, Christ, through your goodness alone; for it befits you to be glorified now and ever and unto the ages. Amen.

Some, speaking boldly and ignorantly and stirring up tongues, say that this divine Revelation was not composed by John himself the glorious evangelist and theologian; so they listen to this tradition

as if at the fringe. I think this not from ignorance nor from the Revelation, but from simplicity alone, if I may speak boldly, and from fondness for earthly things and their efforts, fearful of the abrupt and undeniable conclusions. For when the divine and holy fathers testify openly, who can resist these things or of reaching in any way such a mind as to say that these things are not so? Even the great Basil, in his writings Against Eunomius[7], making a refutation of his impious blasphemies and delusions, concerning which the divine theologian recalled in his fourth discourse, in which the difficulties and their solutions are taken from the God-breathed Scriptures about the controversies concerning the Son through the New and Old Testaments, begins therefore: If the Son is God by nature, and the Father is God by nature, the Son is not another God and the Father another, but similar. And elsewhere: When Moses cried concerning the Son, "He who is," sent me (Ex. 3:14); but of the evangelist John: "In the beginning was the Word," (Jn. 1:1) and not once was it "was," but a fourth time, and again elsewhere "He who is" from God (Jn. 8:47), and "He who is in the arms of the Father," (Jn. 1:18) and in other places: "He who is in heaven," (Jn. 3:13) and in the Revelation: "He who is, and he who was, and he who is to come." (Rev. 1:8) And he did not send away, but afterward again took up the witness of Paul. If then this Revelation were composed by some other John, as the folly of many holds, Basil the great would also have written the discourses from the Revelation under the name of the one who wrote it; but first setting forth the matters of Moses, then those of the apostle and theologian, and as he did those of the apostle Paul, he needed no other to bear witness to these. And these things are from the undeniable statements of the great and holy Basil.

But the great Gregory, surnamed the Theologian, defending himself before the presence of the one hundred and fifty bishops[8], whom they call the Collection, plainly indeed wrote: "Until when

will you inherit my holy mountain?" and other things: "for I am persuaded that others will rule other churches," as John teaches me through the Revelation[9]. But Eusebius Pamphilus[10], in his third discourse of the Ecclesiastical History said therefore: as for those things concerning the Jews, they were among these, and other things: in this passage the apostle and evangelist John is held to be still living, and that for the sake of his testimony to the divine word he was condemned to dwell on the island of Patmos by Domitian son of Vespasian. Writing, indeed, Irenaeus concerning the vote called against the Antichrist in the so-called Revelation of John, in these exact words in the fifth book Against Heresies says these things about John: "If it seems obvious in the present time that his name is being proclaimed, by him would be proclaimed even that of one who has seen the Revelation."[11]

Translator's notes for chapter 22.

1. "And the Spirit and the bride say." The oldest Oecumenius manuscript omits "the Spirit" but it is in Oecumenius manuscripts 203 and 240, as well in the comments below by Oecumenius.

2. "advocator" [ιεροφάντης] Literally a teacher of religious rites and ceremonies, a high-priest, hierophant.

3. Unknown source.

4. This passage reflects a high-level, sophisticated Chalcedonian Christology, drawing on the terminology of the Council of Chalcedon (451) and subsequent, often Miaphysite-leaning clarifications (such as those from St. Cyril of Alexandria or the Council of Constantinople II) that sought to articulate the union of divine and human natures without compromising either.

5. Cyril of Alexandria Letter 39.6

6. Oecumenius, in his commentary on 1 Peter 1:19 says…"Therefore, as day approaches (I speak of the presence of things), you will have the *Morning Star rising in your hearts*: that is, the knowledge of Christ, or his

presence and coming foretold by the prophets, illuminating your hearts like true light.

7. Against Eunomius 4

8. At the Council of Constantinople, A.D. 381.

9. Gregory of Nazianzus Oration 42:8-9

10. Eusebius, Church History 3.1.1.

11. Eusebius, Church History 3.18.1-3; See Irenaeus Against Heresies 5.30.3

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